

PLATO'S PROTAGORAS: A course by Professor Leo Strauss
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Now let us begin at the beginning. We make one assumption which is not entirely clear but which is generally accepted, namely, that students of political science should have some knowledge of the history of political philosophy. Now such knowledge is supplied in the general survey course on the history of political philosophy, but some of you may wish to have a more detailed or more exact knowledge than can be supplied in such a course, a less global and more specialized knowledge. I offer, therefore, every second year a course on Plato's political philosophy.

Now Plato has presented his political philosophy in such a way that a report about it is particularly inadequate or unsatisfactory. I have -- I shall not repeat now what I have said often in class -- but I have now said it in print in The City and Man, the first 16 pages in the chapter on Plato's Republic, and I ask you to read that. I give therefore the course on Plato's political philosophy in the form of an interpretation of a single Platonic dialogue. The first choice would naturally be the Republic, but the Republic has one great defect--it is very long--and therefore I prefer a shorter dialogue. The last time that I lectured on Plato's political philosophy I selected the Gorgias on these grounds: The Gorgias leads up to the question which is in a way the broadest of all questions: How should a man live? And the answer given is generally: The philosophic life is the right life. But in the Gorgias this...the philosophic life is said to be the truly political life, or rather Socrates claims that he is the only true political man, statesman, in Athens. The explicit subject of the Gorgias is rhetoric and rhetoric is asserted to be not an art, but a flattery, a kind of flattery, a sham. Every sham art is a spurious imitation of a general art and Socrates suggests this theme: There are arts dealing with the body and arts dealing with the soul, and there is one which is called gymnastics for the body, and medicine. / writes on board / Building up the healthy body--gymnastics; restoring health when lost--medicine. Similarly there are two arts here. One is called the legislative art, which is said to correspond with gymnastics, and another is called, let us say the punitive art. The Greek word used is the same as justice in the sense of course of vindictive justice. / writes on board / Chiefly punishment, you know, punishment being a kind of medicine for the soul. Now these two together are called the political art. / writes on board / Socrates says there is no common name for the two arts the body. And now we come to the corresponding sham arts. Cosmetics, here, which makes the appearance of a healthy body by all kinds of things. And medicine, that is the art of cooking, cooking, pastry cooking, also a sham gratification. And here, sophistry, and corresponding to that is rhetoric. That is the schema, the very ambiguous schema, which Socrates proposes in the Gorgias.

of his art is, that he should give a brief answer. Now, this has to do again with the distinction between rhetoric and dialectic because the rhetorician as such is a maker of long speeches. The dialectician, on the other hand, is a maker of short speeches. "What did you say?" "Say it again." "On what ground?" This is a maker of short speeches. Now because in dialectic every step can be carefully considered. And whereas in rhetorical speech what is so important is the overall effect of the whole speech, especially on the passions. Now Gorgias claims to be a perfect master of speech, i.e., to be as good at making short speeches as at making long speeches, and therefore he says, of course, I will oblige you, I will make a short speech. Now this is another handicap of Gorgias. The first handicap was that he gets tired out from his long speeches; the second that he is compelled to give short answers. And the consequence of this and another handicap which we will see soon is that he is unable to state his case for rhetoric, and for his rhetoric in particular.

Now there...it is perfectly...I am sure there are quite a few among you who say, What does this strange comedy mean? What is the interest of it for us? A perfectly legitimate question, but which I cannot answer now. I mean, either you have a certain confidence that I am not a--how shall I say it?--a business--now how do you call this?--a comedian...no, show business. Or you have not. I mean, let us therefore wait.

Now Gorgias answers, first, rhetoric is an art which has to do with speeches. But Socrates says, all art has to do with speeches. For example, medicine has to do with speeches about health, hasn't it? All speeches deal with some subject matter. An art dealing with speeches, which do not deal with subject matter, does not exist. Gorgias tries to get out of this fix by saying that yes, but some arts proceed chiefly through manual work and can be practiced in silence, that is to say, without speech; whereas others proceed chiefly or solely through speech. An extreme example: arithmetic, speech. And you can of course also figure silently but the actual work is when you speak to yourself. Whereas the work of a sculptor, his art is practiced silently; he doesn't have to figure "speakingly". Rhetoric is one of the arts which proceed chiefly through speeches. But still it must have a subject matter. That's simple. It's subject matter are the greatest and best of human affairs. But what are these greatest and best of human affairs? Is not perhaps health the most important thing, or strength, or wealth? Now Socrates argues this out in one form which is to be called a dialogue within the dialogue. In other words he makes the physician speak in favor of health being the greatest thing. He makes the gymnastics teacher speak in favor of strength, or beauty being the best thing. And he makes the money-maker speak in favor of wealth being the best thing. This means in this dialogue within a dialogue, which is a very common occurrence in Platonic dialogues, has here, however, a special meaning, a special purpose. And this, by the way, is a general rule. There are a limited number of devices which Plato used. One, for example, the dialogue within the dialogue. But this may have a very different function in different contexts.

Now in this context the function of the dialogue within the dialogue is to show Gorgias his competitors. Gorgias says, I teach the most important thing. And then he shows him the teacher of medicine, who raises the same claim. By showing...by reminding Gorgias of his competitors, he adds a third predicament to the two which we have already seen: his tiredness, and the compulsion to speak...give brief answers. A general lesson from this: Socrates does these things, for example, the dialogue within the dialogue showing these competitors; Socrates himself uses rhetoric, because these are rhetorical devices. Or his dialectics as used here is rhetorical, is a mixture of dialectics and rhetoric. And if we may make a big jump, in no way born out by what I have said now, but a kind of hypothesis, the Gorgias, whatever it may do regarding rhetoric, exhibits Socrates' rhetoric, which is in no way the theme of the dialogue, but it exhibits it in deed. Now we are still confronted with this question: What are the greatest human things? Since there is such a...or what is happiness? And Gorgias says that the good which rhetoric produces is in truth the greatest good, and the cause of both freedom and ruling over others in one's city. For rhetoric enables a man to persuade people by speeches in political assemblies and thus to control the physicians, the money-makers, or whoever may be competitors of the rhetorician. We may say rhetoric is the art of persuading political assemblies about politically relevant matters. That is surely true, but it does not go very deep. Socrates argues, continues as follows: You say rhetoric persuades. But does not the mathematician, too, persuade? We must make a distinction between teaching and persuading. Rhetoric, rhetoric does not teach, as mathematics teaches. It only persuades.

Now while this exchange goes on, there occurs a shift of emphasis to one particular kind of rhetoric, forensic rhetoric, the rhetoric practiced before law courts, the kind of rhetoric which is concerned with just and unjust things as such, and which concerns the individual who accuses or is accused. And here in this context the impression is created that just and unjust things are the sole theme of rhetoric. Now after Socrates has led Gorgias to this point, a leading of which Gorgias is fully unaware, he leads him again to political rhetoric proper, to what the Greeks called deliberative rhetoric, that is, what is going on in the assembly where you decide about laws, peace and war, and so on. With an explicit reference to the potential students in the audience, because there are many people around, Socrates induces Gorgias to reveal the immense power of rhetoric. The immense power of rhetoric. Every ambitious student in the audience, potential tyrants, so to speak, must become Gorgias' pupil if Gorgias succeeds in showing that, without my training you will never succeed in the arena. Just as today one could perhaps, in this country, one could perhaps make a case you have to go to law school, and perhaps to this or that law school, if you want to be highly successful...there are some people who would also say through political science departments...but at this moment it seemed to be clear that being trained by Gorgias would be the best way of becoming an outstanding speaker. The main...the answer of Gorgias can be reduced to this simple proposition: Rhetoric is quasi-omnipotent.

He tells a number of examples of what rhetoricians have achieved, both in private life and in public life. In private life he gives the example, his brother was a physician and could not persuade a patient to take a bitter pill, but he, the rhetorician, Gorgias, succeeded, where the physician completely failed. And so you see how eminently powerful rhetoric is. So after having made clear how powerful rhetoric is, he can't help disregarding the drawback of that very power. Because it is so powerful it is naturally feared and distrusted. And therefore the teachers of rhetoric are in danger of being expelled from the cities and even killed. The implication of that--and Gorgias says that is very deplorable, because every art can be misused. I mean, a gymnastic teacher for example, wants to teach the boy so that he will be a good soldier later on, etc., but if this boy hits his father you can't blame the gymnastic teacher for that. Similarly if a student of rhetoric misuses his art, that's not the fault of the professor of rhetoric and he must not be blamed for that. In brief, rhetoric can be used unjustly but it ought not to be used unjustly. In itself it is as just as gymnastics, which also can be misused.

Now Socrates as follows: What does the power of rhetoric then mean? The orator is superior to the expert, to the knower, for example to the physician and in per...especially in persuading crowds, i.e., ignoramuses. He himself being also an ignoramus, let us say, in the matter of weaponry. And the experts have a certain opinion. Let us assume that the experts are not split. But the experts have no power of persuading crowds, I mean they can talk to other experts. So there must be someone who has no knowledge but only some information given to him by the experts and he talks. He is an ignoramus, he talks to ignoramuses, and that's that. This is not a denial of the power of rhetoric, of course, but only a spelling out of what that power means. Ultimately the power of rhetoric has to do with the superior bodily power of the large mass of ignoramuses over the small minority of non-ignoramuses.

Yet Socrates proceeds to question the power of rhetoric itself by raising this question: Is the orator also ignorant of the just and unjust, the base and noble, the good and bad? What about that? Must your pupil, Gorgias, know these things before you teach him how to speak or do you teach him the just and unjust things, etc., while you teach him to, how to speak? Gorgias, with Olympian authority, says, if he doesn't happen to know these things which, so to speak, every child knows, I will teach them to him too. But Socrates says, the man who has learned the music things--now listen carefully--becomes a musical man. I must try to express something in English which is not so easily expressable in English. A man who has learned the "horse-ic" things (from horse) becomes a horse man, a horse-ic man. In Greek that is perfectly simple. Now we come to the real point. A man who has learned the just things, does he not become a just man? Gorgias says, yes. And why he says yes, that's a very great riddle, but the fact is undeniable. Hence Socrates concludes, the orator will never act unjustly or misuse his power, because he knows the just things. But he who knows the just things is just. And

he will not act unjustly, never misuse his rhetoric.

This conclusion should make Gorgias very attractive to decent Athenians. Rhetoric, as taught by Gorgias, cannot possibly be used for any bad purpose. The next thing, Gorgias is friend-...Socrates is friendly to Gorgias. He says, look what a paragon you have here. He is not only a marvelous teacher of rhetoric; he teaches a rhetoric which can never be used for any unjust purposes. But Socrates is not quite so philanthropic. He points out to Gorgias that he has said the contrary before, namely that rhetoric can be misused. In a word, the result is that Gorgias does not know how rhetoric is related to justice.

There is an explicit self-contradiction which is not quite clear. Rhetoric may be...the rhetorician may be unjust, and therefore, since people know that, he is in danger. They don't trust him. The alternative is that the rhetorician cannot be unjust; hence, he will not be in danger. Does that not follow? If no one mistrusts him? But you can also put an implicit self-contradiction; again the is clear. The rhetorician may be unjust, therefore he is in danger. But the rhetorician is omnipotent. Hence, he is not in danger; he can handle every accusation. People may distrust him as much as they want; they may accuse him of a capital crime; he will never be condemned and he will always prove his superiority because of the tremendous power of rhetoric. But if he is omnipotent, it is of course safe for him to be unjust. He is safe, especially, through forensic rhetoric, because distrust leads to accusation. So. Now we have then here this, this leads us to a somewhat different stratum. Gorgias suggests that rhetoric is omnipotent. And this is common sensically an absurd thing, of course, but still there is something implied in it. In a way Socrates says, also asserts a certain omnipotence, when he says he who knows the just things is just. Knowledge guarantees justice, is also a kind of omnipotence of speech. And this, we can say, is what Socrates and Gorgias, these two antagonists, share: a certain view according to which there is an omnipotence of speech. That they have in mind different kinds of speeches is true. But, by the way, if someone regards the thesis omnipotence of speech or preponderant power of speech as absurd, think of the many people who say today that the truth must win out in the end. Reason must eventually win. That's exactly the point which we are considering. If there is such a preponderance, in the extreme case an omnipotence, of logos, which is both speech and reason.

The result of this very short conversation between Socrates and Gorgias is that Gorgias is knocked out. Polus, who is not tired out, rises in his defense. He disapproves of Socrates' procedure. Socrates raised an improper question, namely, the question whether the rhetorician must know the just things. This is a kind of question which one doesn't raise in our circles. You can easily find contemporary parallels for that. I could even, if I had looked it up, give you... indicate the page and the volume of the American Political Science

Review where this accusation was made when I made a certain statement about a certain school, I was accused. This kind of thing is not to be said. It is irrelevant, immaterial. According to Polus, Gorgias was ashamed to say no and so, where he should have said yes, and so he got into trouble. Now Polus, who is much younger, and not exhausted, tries to turn the table on Socrates by now becoming the questioner, because he has seen that this Olympian thing in Gorgias--I can answer all questions--is a very dangerous thing and that in a way, the humble man, who doesn't answer questions, only asks questions, is tactically in a much better position. And so he has tried, tries to imitate Socrates. But that is of course a different situation because Socrates had never claimed that he is able to answer all questions and therefore the situation is somewhat different.

Socrates denies now, in the interchange with Polus, what he had not denied in talking to Gorgias, namely, that rhetoric is an art. He says now it is merely a knack acquired by experience, which produces some grace and pleasure. Well, say what a comedian on the stage does. He knows that this kind of jokes on this occasion will hit, and so on and so on. Socrates doesn't know whether his view of rhetoric applies to Gorgias' kind of rhetoric, for Gorgias' art has not become clear, and therefore one does not know. Gorgias' view of rhetoric and Gorgias' rhetoric itself, are not revealed in the dialogue called after him. That is remarkable. Socrates starts his view of rhetoric...states his view of rhetoric to Gorgias, but with the understanding that he will discuss this view not with Gorgias, but with Polus. Polus will be used as a kind of guinea pig to bring to light Socrates' view. But Gorgias, as it were, is silent, only listens. Gorgias' reaction to it will also not come out. Neither Gorgias' view of rhetoric, nor his view of Socrates' rhetoric will come out thematically. This is the character of the dialogue.

Now Socrates' definition of rhetoric I have already indicated in that schema. Rhetoric is a kind of or part of flattery. Flattery is directed toward seeming well-being of body or soul, whereas the arts are directed toward the true well-being of body and soul. In other words, flatteries aim at the most pleasant, whereas the arts aim at the best. Furthermore, arts are able to give an account, a logos, of what they are doing. The shoemaker, when you watch him, can tell you why he makes this shoe or that, whereas the flatteries are unable to give an account of what they are doing. Now this is what Socrates develops at great length. There are of course great difficulties here. For example, can there not be an art dealing with the pleasant or at least dealing also with the pleasant? Is, for example, a physician not concerned also with inflicting the minimum of pain or maybe even giving the maximum of pleasure to his patients, while operating on them, etc.? Good. I mention one more point. The legislative art produces genuine health of the soul. Justice restores genuine health of the soul. Justice is here understood as an art. I cannot help this difficulty. This whole schema seems to imply that the legislative art is the highest form of human knowledge because it is one which makes the human soul perfect, the best. What the relation of the legislative art

to philosophy, or to a dialectic is, is obscure. It is possible that philosophy or dialectics are simply disregarded in these, or abstracted from, in these people.

Now Polus is of course shocked by the suggestion that rhetoric should not be an art but only something as low as cosmetics, or even lower than. If...and he argues as follows: If rhetoric were a kind of flattery, i.e., a low thing, the orators would not have power, the power in the cities which they actually have. In other words, Polus tries to show that rhetoric is an art by showing its power. According to him rhetoricians have the powers which tyrants have, which incidentally implies that rhetoric is essentially unjust, because it is understood that tyrants are essentially unjust. Now, but to follow his argument more precisely: According to Polus tyrants also have power in the cities. But can one say that the tyrants, that since the tyrants are very powerful they have an art, that there is such a thing as a tyrannical art? This is at least a question. Polus somehow does not consider that. At any rate, the issue whether rhetoric is an art is dropped. The discussion comes to center around the question of what is power.

According to Socrates power is something good for him who has power. In other words, if you have a very...a man is very strong and cannot use his strength in any way for himself, he is not powerful, and so on. According to Polus, power is the ability to do what seems to be best to the individual concerned. And this of course is a

thing, because as Socrates points out, something may seem to be good to a fool without being good for him, and therefore to that extent he has no power. Polus understands by a powerful man a man who can kill, exile, impoverish, and so on, everyone he likes to kill, etc. In other words, a vulgar notion of what a powerful man is; he can make or break his fellow men. Being powerful means, according to that view, being able to do what one wills. But, Socrates says, whatever we do, we do for some purpose, and the purpose is that what we truly will. For example, we do not will primarily to kill, but we kill because we will some good for us, and believe we can get that good by killing. But what is good for us, with a view to which we might kill or not? The actions as actions are meaningless and therefore neutral. They are done for the sake of ends, for example, wealth, and other things which are good in themselves. Striving for wealth, and doing what brings about wealth, is therefore good, whereas mere killing is not good, because it may be...it may get us into trouble. Sensible men choose the useful things, not merely things which are spectacular. A man who can do everything, but does not get what is good for him, is of course not powerful. It is here tacitly denied that a reasonable man will ever do anything from a whim, for the fun of it, at random, for example, sitting down, or rising, without a purpose, just as...That is tacitly denied, abstracted from. And that is of course a point we have to consider.

At this point, now, the dialogue makes a decisive turn. Polus is

obviously dissatisfied and returns to his original assertion by giving it a personal character. Would you, Socrates, not wish to do in the city whatever you like, or do you not envy people who can do what they like? making and breaking, and so on. Socrates says, do you mean killing justly or killing unjustly? And he explains. Killing unjustly is altogether bad, and killing justly is at best a distasteful, hence bad, necessity. The good for the sake of which a reasonable man acts is justice, or at least compatible with justice. Hence, to suffer injustice, while this is an evil, is a lesser evil than doing injustice. These are the well known theses of Socrates, around which all dialogue turns.

Polus, however, says, injustice and happiness are perfectly compatible. Socrates: killing is under no circumstances something good and that means, there are actions which are under all circumstances bad, which are under no circumstances neutral, like, well, , which may be a bad action under certain circumstances, it may be a good action in others, in others it may be indifferent. Now, here we have this situation, if we analyze this thing. An implicit contradiction: all actions conducive to the end, say, wealth, are good; the alternative: certain actions are bad in all circumstances. That means that the highest consideration cannot be limited to the end, say, wealth, or whatever it may be, but concerns also the quality of the means. Now it is quite interesting that this first proposition that all actions conducive to a good end are good is made when Socrates is the questioner, while the other, common-sensical view that certain actions are bad in all circumstances is made when Polus is the questioner or Socrates the answerer. Now this second view that certain actions are bad in all circumstances corresponds to the ordinary understanding of justice, and this implies that Polus does not truly know what justice is. And according to the logic of the argument with Polus, he is not a just man, because he doesn't know what justice is. Now, and of course this is also very bad for Gorgias because Gorgias has claimed his pupils will all be just, and now we see here a flagrant case of an unjust pupil of Gorgias. Gorgias is wrong.... we see now how the discussion with Polus throws light back on the discussion with Gorgias and therefore how rightly the dialogue is called Gorgias, because the discussion with Polus and later on with Callicles illuminates Gorgias! Gorgias is wrong in asserting or implying that rhetoric is necessarily just. The question which remains to be settled is, however, is rhetoric, nevertheless, quasi-omnipotent?

I repeat that Socrates shows this all to Gorgias in the case of this pupil, Polus, using Polus as a kind of guinea pig. He does this all for the benefit of Gorgias and now in the sequel he does something else. Socrates shows that he, and not Gorgias, teaches Polus justice, and therewith, according to that logic, makes him just. This we have to consider later.

Now Socrates... But we cannot merely read, we have to think while we read. Now Socrates admits that suffering injustice is bad, a very common-sensical view. And hence killing justly, in self-defense, is

of course all right, and surely better than to be killed unjustly. But then the question...But if self-defense is just, then, of course, forensic rhetoric may be just. Someone may try to kill you not by shooting at you, but by trapping you. There is a technical term for that, railroading?

Student: Framing

Framing. By framing you. Now if you are entitled to take cover when someone shoots at you, you are entitled to counteract the framing by forensic rhetoric. Forensic rhetoric must be just. This is not brought out here and we must keep this in mind. In other words, the wholesale condemnation of rhetoric, which Socrates seems to propound, is irrational and we have to find the reason why Socrates makes these extreme statements.

Now Socrates turns to refuting Polus' assertion according to which an unjust man may be happy or blessed. Before beginning with the refutation he admits to Polus that Polus' view is the view of most men, including such pillars of society as Nicias and Pericles, or their families. In other words, Polus has opinion on his side. Common opinion is immoral, or at the very least, not very strictly moral. Socrates renders his own view more precise by saying that the unjust men would improve their fate if they underwent punishment, by gods and men. That is to say that an...that is spelled out very graphically... that an evil-doer, tortured to death, while watching...as his wife and children are tortured to death, is happier than if, by escaping the torturers, he would become a tyrant and be "happy" ever after. **So that is a very paradoxical assertion.** Socrates says, but this is what all people, with the exception of me, think.

Now Polus claims that Socrates is crazy. Everybody would agree with Polus in rejecting Socrates' assertion. Socrates, however, claims that everyone would agree with him. So in other words each claims that he stands for the common opinion of mankind. But Socrates adds a qualification. Everyone would agree with him if they were to argue the thing out dialectically. Not rhetorically. Not arguing dialectically, everyone would agree with Polus. But in arguing dialectically, i.e., led by Socrates, everyone would agree with Socrates. So in the sequel Socrates proves at least this much, that Polus is compelled to agree with him; in a dialectical exchange the cause of justice wins. Socrates exhibits the power of dialectics. In an argument between individuals-- Socrates is alone, Polus alone. Not in what would happen in a law court when you address, an orator addresses a crowd. The implication is the just man is lost before a jury. Well we know a famous case of which Socrates must have thought, but surely the

the case of Socrates. There is a ... if you look up in the Gorgias 474a-b and compare it with the Apology of Socrates 37a, you are in for a surprise. Because in the Gorgias Socrates says he does not do a certain thing which he admits doing in the Apology, namely, to have a conversation with the many. And Socrates calls his Apology a conversation with the city of Athens, i.e., with the many. This in passing.

There is another difficulty, a graver difficulty. People may not be able to refute or to contradict the thesis of justice, according to which suffering injustice is better than doing injustice. They may nevertheless not be convinced by that failure. Polus refers to the consensus of all men in public assemblies and Socrates refers to the consensus of all men in dialectical exchange, one with one. But Polus also refers to the consensus of all men in their feelings, and Socrates to the consensus of all men in non-selfcontradictory speech. In other words, if you think of this example of the man tortured to death, you remember that? Seeing his wife and children tortured to death, and so on? And under no circumstances...and rather than, rather than escaping and becoming a tyrant? That Polus says, that's the way in which people feel. And what Socrates implies is that they cannot maintain that in speech. Do you see the point, the difference? And it is of course then a question what is truer, the feeling--even if this feeling leads to selfcontradiction when expressed, or the non-selfcontradictory speech. In other words, the great question is how powerful is that non-selfcontradictory speech? How powerful is rational speech? How powerful is reason? We have seen before that the dialogue suggests in different ways, in a Gorgian way and a Socratic way, that there is a preponderance, not to say omnipotence, of logos. And here we see from another side that this is a question. This hypothesis of the preponderance or omnipotence of logos will be tested in the Gorgias. And you see how this is connected with the particular problem of rhetoric because rhetoric is of course not strictly rational speech. But it is, nevertheless, speech. And the power of...what is the power of speech compared with other things? With what other things you will see soon, in case you do not / Remainder of the sentence lost at the turning of the tape. From student notes: "Now I will give a summary of the refutation of Polus." /

Polus asserts, to repeat, that justice is worse...doing injustice is worse than suffering injustice but he also says that it is baser than doing injustice, than suffering injustice. But baser means here this. In Greek it means you get a bad reputation if you act unjustly. But still, but acting unjustly can be very profitable. Well you only have to read the story of Mr. Giancana and other gentlemen to understand the thesis of Polus. Polus, in other words, refers to a difference between the good and the noble, the good and the noble. Now the noble things, Socrates tries to show, are such either because they are pleasant or because they are useful. Now partly this has to do with Greek usage, which I cannot, I can't help it. One would have to make a very complicated translation with different English terms to bring out the equivalent of that. The word which I translate "the noble," kalon, means also fine, and beautiful. Now when you say something is beautiful, perhaps you mean either it is pleasant--a beautiful smell is obviously a pleasant smell, or also we call something beautiful that works beautifully, because it does its job well, it is useful. And correspondingly, the ugly or base things are so either because they

are painful or because they are harmful. Now if to act unjustly is baser, uglier than suffering injustice, doing injustice is more unpleasant than suffering injustice, or it is more harmful than suffering injustice. But doing injustice is obviously not more unpleasant than suffering injustice, as you see in a simple example: To hit someone over the head is less, is very unpleasant to the man who is hit over the head, but not necessarily unpleasant to the hitter. I think this is clear. Hence, doing injustice is more harmful than suffering injustice, contrary to what Polus has asserted.

Now I will not go into a deeper analysis of this argument. I will only say that Socrates has not proved his point. Because if you prove someone has contradicted himself you have of course not proven which of the two contradictory assertions is a preferable assertion. Is this clear? I mean, if you show a man, if you show a man who says that A is B, and force him to admit that A is not B, then you have not proven that A is not B. You only have proven that he contradicts himself. And this is therefore an open question which of the two things is right. So, in other words, Socrates has not proven here that doing injustice is worse than suffering injustice. He has only shown that Polus contradicts himself in this respect.

So what Socrates has done is he has persuaded Polus to prefer the view that doing injustice is worse than suffering injustice--which is a feat, undeniable, but not a refutation. Socrates possesses undeniably the art of rhetoric, the art of persuasion. Although Socrates rhetoric--that is also clear--is an essentially just rhetoric. He has never... So. Let us draw this conclusion. The rhetoric is not only the theme of the Gorgias, which it obviously is, but it is also the mode of the dialogue. It is a rhetorical discussion of rhetoric. And if we take this into consideration--the rhetorical character of the discussion, generally speaking the mode of the discussion as distinguished from the content of the discussion--we will transform the two-dimensionality of the printed page, where every sentence is as weighty as every other sentence, so to speak, into the three-dimensionality of what is going on in the souls of those participating, and the latter alone is true understanding.

Now, Socrates, after having settled this point--that doing injustice is worse than suffering injustice--Socrates continues as follows: Suffering justly for having committed injustice is punishment. But all just things are noble or beautiful things. Hence being justly punished is noble or beautiful. But being punished is not pleasant--particularly clear in the case of corporeal punishment. Hence just punishment is good, namely, it is good for the soul. The soul is freed from punishment, by punishment from injustice. Punishment is medicine for the soul. Now justly, or correctly inflicted punishment is medicine for the soul, i.e., an art, the art called dike in Greek, right or justice but in this particular application, punitive justice. And hence it follows necessarily that

the properly punished tyrant, or orator, is better off than the non-punished tyrant or orator.

Now here are some questions. In the first...Polus has no way any more to avoid these consequences, he is caught. Now in the first place, one premise: all just things are noble or beautiful. Is this true? Well those who have done some reading in Aristotle's Rhetoric and other places know there is one conspicuous exception to that rule. I mean, namely that just punishment, say other just things, are also noble. A just action is a noble action. But to undergo just punishment is not noble. Common sense. Do you admire a man for going to jail? That is part of the noble, that there is something which can be admired. So and this is here presupposed and vitiates the whole argument. Secondly, if being punished is noble, according to the logic here punishing is a noble act. Now as a noble act it must either be useful to the punisher or pleasant to the punisher. But it is not useful to the punisher, assuming that the punisher is a just man; he doesn't become more just by inflicting punishment. Hence it must be pleasant for him. So. Good. The third part: Is it true that in receiving punishment makes men better? You know, no topic is more topical today than this one, but it was a question at all times. Does it, punishment make men more just? There ... two other virtues were mentioned in that context--wisdom and courage. Do men become wiser? Take this simple example--by coercion. Courageous, perhaps; it all depends. Coercion can do something to make men in a sense courageous, you know? But, in other words, it is impossible to become wise by coercion. Punishment is from coercion. Is...how come that coercion should have this tremendous power regarding justice, and no power regarding wisdom? Is it so that logos, reasoning, is not sufficient for making men just, whereas it is sufficient for teaching them, for giving them theoretical insight? If all vice, including injustice, is ignorance, as was implied in the Polus section, not punishment but learning, teaching would lead men away from justice. Again that is of course in the form of the question of rehabilitation; that is today the main discussion. If injustice is removed by punishment, then can justice be a kind of knowledge, as it was supposed to be? What has coercion to do with teaching? Well of course we say, I'll teach you a lesson, you say to a naughty boy. And in a way coercion does teach, but of course it is not exactly what we do in classrooms, for example.

Now let us apply this to rhetoric, or rather let us see how the conclusion which Socrates draws to rhetoric. If all these things which he has shown to Polus are correct rhetoric is of little use to the just man. The question of just forensic rhetoric, when he is unjustly accused, is not even alluded. It is...rhetoric is of some use to the just men only for accusing those unjust men for whom he cares. For example, if he should have committed a crime, or his friends, or his fatherland, individuals or groups for which he cares--accusing them, there rhetoric is good. And that means simply like going...bring them, say one's friend, to the judge for the

improvement of his soul, as you bring him to a dentist for the improvement of his teeth. On the other hand, Socrates says, one ought to prevent by all means one's enemies from being punished for their unjust acts. They...that serves them right, that they embezzled that money and go to Florida and whatever else they might do. Now, Polus is not convinced, but he is unable to defend his position; he is made...rendered speechless. And we have here a clear case of a conflict between the feeling and what he can maintain by speech. And the mere fact that this possibility exists--well, we all have had this experience somewhat, presented with a very persuasive case and we were unable to say anything against it and yet we were unconvinced--this alone shows a certain essential weakness of speech. Because we did it also in cases where we found later on that the man was right in his speech which did not convince us.

Now in the Gorgias section, we have this--in the Gorgias section, to summarize now, we have this situation. Rhetoric is in itself just--one assertion. Opposed by: rhetoric is necessarily unjust because of its omnipotence. You know, you can't take any chances, because he can always talk himself out of a In the Polus section Socrates asserts in the sharpest way, rhetoric is unjust. Rhetoric, no, Polus himself says this, as a matter of fact, by comparing the orator to the tyrant. And Socrates says rhetoric is altogether bad, it is flattery. Yet when we read carefully we see that it is not altogether bad; it is good for self-accusation, as he says. But we as readers, and as critical readers, we say why is it not also good for just self-defense? That would And the question would then be, why is self-accusation stressed and self-defense treated with silence? And the answer would be that in this dialogue Socrates seems to abstract from all good things other than justice. You do not become more unjust by being unjustly condemned. Life, liberty, and the other goods are disregarded; the only thing which is considered is justice. And this has something to do with the fact that the highest art which appears within the horizon up to this point is the legislative art, and not any higher art. Only through this abstraction from all goods other than justice is it possible to maintain the omnipotence or quasi-omnipotence of speeches. But if speeches have this tremendous power, why is there any need for punishment? Punishment is obviously not mere speech, but locked up or something more which is mere speech.

Above all, in all this discussion of justice, which we have seen, there is not for one moment the question raised, and answer, what is justice? Does this ring a bell, this fact? Mr. Dry?

Dry: The first book of the Republic has as its conclusion Socrates' statement that I have not yet discussed what justice is.

After he has proven that justice is good he has not yet answered the question what is justice. In other words, we leave it at a vague notion of justice without knowing precisely what it is. The same is the case here. And we must see whether in the second, larger half of the dialogue, the Callicles section, the question is raised, the question

of what justice is is raised.

Now this much as a survey of the first half of the Gorgias. There is no time left for beginning a discussion of the Callicles section, and let us see whether there are any questions you would like to raise. Yes.

Q: You spoke of this abstraction from all other goods except justice and I also recall you remarked about the Republic that there was an abstraction. Is it a similar abstraction?

S: There is some; I mean there is a kinship between the two dialogues, which is in one way quite obvious--I mentioned the tripartition which is the same in the two cases. And then the obvious themes--justice is But it is a different one. The Republic discusses justice in that way, that it answers the question of what justice is by answering simultaneously the question of what the best regime is. The best regime is not the theme in the Gorgias. The Gorgias is from this point of view less political than the Republic. But this has more grave implications. What is the answer of the Republic to the question regarding the best regime? Mr. Dry.

Dry: The best regime is one of perfect communism with every man doing his job.

S: Yes but still, that's not the main point. Who rules?

Dry: That man who's most fit to rule, i.e., the philosopher.

S: The Philosopher. There is nothing of philosophers ruling in the Gorgias. But that has a more specific implication. Can everyone be a philosopher, according to the Republic? But...state it positively. I mean, state it positively. Certain...I mean you need a certain training; that goes without saying. But you need also a certain nature. This reflection on the nature of the philosopher is completely absent from the Gorgias. From the Gorgias you get this impression: that it is every man's duty to philosophize. And...in other words, a certain abstraction from human nature. And this leads to the consequence that the overall effect of the Gorgias is very depressing. If you make very high demands on every human being, you are bound to be greatly disappointed. You know? And therefore, that is the consequence of it. I mean, this is one striking difference. One can perhaps say it as follows: You have Socrates' statement of his life, his work to the city in the Apology; and then you have, the Republic is here at the other end. In between is the Gorgias. This is roughly the situation. The Gorgias contains...Well, Socrates says in the Apology, right at the beginning, and...I will tell you the whole truth. Yes, but that is not quite true, because Socrates does not tell the Athenians the reflections which induced him to make his defensive speech and to make it in this particular form. This reasoning preceding the Apology is given in the Gorgias; and there Socrates says his position, when a man like himself would have to defend himself before the city, would be that of a pastry cook who is accused...no, I am sorry, a physician who is accused by a pastry cook before a

tribunal of children, that he gives always these bitter pills and not the sweets. And he would of course be condemned. Now he cannot... but Socrates cannot, as a defendant, say to the Athenians, I regard you as children. Can he do that? It would be improper, contempt of court, or what have you. And therefore, this...in other words, the whole...you can, if you read the Apology in a two-dimensional way, like a newspaper article or a textbook or what have you, then you'll never get the background. By background I do not mean this, that his mother was a mid-wife and this kind of background, human interest story. The background is what is going on in the soul of the speaker and what does not come out, cannot come out in the speech. To some extent this third dimension of the Apology is supplied in the Gorgias. But it is still given here, in a way which is relatively popular, in this sense, that it starts from the premise more acceptable to the demos that what Socrates does, his way of life, is a way of life which everyone could and should live. As if it were to...the Gorgias is very important for the popular now prevailing, and having prevailed for some time, of Socrates, and which I'll caricature as follows: Socrates is a kind of Uncle Sam pointing his finger at you--you remember the wartime posters, you are too young for that--pointing his finger and saying, This youth, do your philosophizing today. Or buttonholing every person in the street, What is virtue? Which, of course, is a sheer caricature of Socrates. He knew quite well that you could not bring men to, even to ordinary justice by this kind of procedure. But, yes, there is...One can say these three dialogues, the Apology, the Gorgias, and the Republic, are, belong together from this point of view. The Republic makes it clear that philosophizing can be only the work of a small minority and therefore there is necessarily a conflict between...not necessarily leading to slaughter, but a tension, let me say, between the city and philosophy. This conflict does not, as such, come out in the Apology, nor in the Gorgias. In the Gorgias the conflict is presented as a factual one, but not as an essential one. Meaning this: Socrates suggests vaguely that in the good old times, before FDR, before Pericles, things were reasonably all right in Athens. I say The Revolutionary War in this country everything was fine. And you know that there is no fundamental conflict, only a factual conflict. I will speak of that in the Callicles section. Is there any other point? Yes.

Q: When you mentioned the irrationality of punishment I couldn't help thinking of Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, in which the only way for him to be or to exist is to willfully accept punishment because of his crime. This was sensible and rational for him to do this, or else his soul dried up and became nothing. So I wondered also if it would not be rational then if one's soul commits a wrong act, to accept the punishment, even seek out the punishment.

S: Yes, this would be I think in accordance with what Socrates says. But take a man who is not yet convinced that he acted unjustly. Raskolnikov has come to repent, and to see that he acted wrongly and then he felt he could not get rid of this disfigurement of

his soul as you call it, except by some remedial action. But most criminals, or at least many, let me say, do not...have not reached that stage. Will they by mere flogging, imprisonment, or the prospect of the hot seat come to see that this was wrong? That is the question.

A: Probably not.

S: Yes, but this is the question with which we are concerned. I mean the question is not...In other words, the true conversion of Raskolnikov precedes the punishment, is not brought about by the punishment.

Q: Is not what?

S: Is not brought about by the punishment. The conversion, the insight. The question is whether punishment as such produces insight.

Q: Would you say that, would it be possible for any man to really get in touch with his soul, with all the big words--justice, love, God, and so forth, without undergoing great suffering and great punishment?

S: But that is a long question. I mean, there were...there is a famous saying of Aeschylus, the tragic poet, where he identifies suffering, in Greek pathos, with mathos, with learning -- pathos, mathos.

But whether this is in agreement with what the philosophers teach--Plato and Aristotle--is a long question. For example, in the case of Socrates, is there any emphasis on his suffering as the condition of his becoming a thoroughly decent man? The formula... I mean, there is a formula there which needs interpretation. Still as a formula it is known to everyone. Socrates has in himself what he calls a daemonic thing which guides him. This has...this belongs to him and was always in him. There is no reference to...I mean, in other words, a peculiar gift to him, say. This, not suffering, made him what he was. And that is...one can, I mean what has frequently been attacked by people coming from the Biblical tradition as a certain superficiality of the Greeks, and especially of the Greek philosophers, has something to do with what you said. Do you see that point? And strange as it may sound, Nietzsche above all attacked the Greeks as superficial in their psychology because of this seeming "optimism" which they had. That is a great question. And it is very good you brought it up.

I do not...Let me say one word in conclusion. I have, I asked you to have some patience because I have to bring in certain things which seem to be merely funny and curious without having any importance. Yet one must be patient--these things are important but they reveal their meaning only in the larger context. And in addition you must not forget that I did this survey of the Gorgias only in order to have a minimum preparation, a better minimum preparation for the study of the Protagoras than we otherwise would

have. And the Protagoras we will start from scratch and go, proceed by short speeches, reading each sentence.

Now we will begin. (Will you close the door, please?) I tried to explain last time that the Gorgias presents a rhetorical discussion of rhetoric. Gorgias is the master of rhetoricians. Rhetoric and Gorgias' view of rhetoric do not come to sight owing to the handicaps from which he suffers--he is still tired, and so on. But these handicaps were arranged by Plato. Why does Plato not wish to bring out Gorgias' rhetoric and his view of rhetoric? This is the question. Plato does bring out Socrates' view of rhetoric, as well as Socrates' rhetorical practice. We do not know, however, how Socrates' view of rhetoric would have to be revised in the light of Gorgias' view, which is unknown. Plato makes invisible something of importance. He abstracts from it. We have to find out from what he abstracts and why he does this. In other words Plato demands critical readers. He knows, of course, that not all readers are critical and can be critical. Those who cannot be critical will simply accept or reject what Socrates says. Plato makes us realize what one can call the stratification of the readers. Or, to use a vaguer term, the variety of human beings. This knowledge is called psychology. Psychology is already a Greek word and it is connected in Plato with something else which he calls , guiding of the souls. Now this knowledge of the soul, or of the souls, and their guidance, is the basis of the political art, contrary to the view which Socrates suggests in the Gorgias that the fundamental part of the political art is the legislative art. The legislative art itself must ultimately be based on knowledge of the variety of souls. It must be based on psychology, or, in order to avoid some misunderstandings, let us say , lest we mistake it for what is now academic psychology.

Socrates' explicit view of rhetoric is to the effect that rhetoric is a kind of flattery, a sham, a sham imitation of punitive justice--punitive justice being understood as the art of restoring the health of the soul. This view of rhetoric is based on the premise that suffering injustice is better than doing injustice, whereas rhetoric itself is based on the view that suffering injustice is worse than doing injustice. Now Socrates argues this matter out with Polus, as we have seen, and after he has refuted Polus he says that rhetoric is good only for self-accusation, in other words, for your own liberation from injustice--which implies, of course, that rhetoric is not simply flattery, because if it can have such a good effect. Socrates also forces us to raise the question which he does not bring up here: why should rhetoric be used...not be used for just self-defense, which after all would seem to be a legitimate purpose? The answer to this question is this: Socrates is concerned only with justice, i.e., with ones being just, and not with the other goods, like life, freedom, fame, and so on. He abstracts from that. The very

distinction between flattery and art is based on the fundamental distinction between the pleasant and the good in such a way that the art, rational procedure, can never have anything to do with the promotion of pleasure. We can also say here, what is effective here is an abstraction from pleasure.

Polus is refuted in that sense that he is shown to contradict himself. His self-contradiction is of importance because it is a typical one. Ordinarily men cannot make up their minds as to what is the greatest good--justice or life, freedom, wealth, and fame. Common sensically we would, of course, say both are goods but the question is which has the right of way in a case of conflict; which is the greatest good? And most human beings would of course say, if they are not compelled to choose, justice is the highest good. But if they are compelled to choose they might prefer life, liberty, and so on, to justice. However this may be, Polus' refutation by Socrates is not a proof of the view that justice is the highest good; it is merely a proof that Polus contradicts himself. Socrates, however, claims that the refutation of Polus is a proof of the view that justice is the highest good. This is unsatisfactory and therefore the true discussion begins only at this moment and at that moment namely when Callicles enters in the third part, which is more than the second half of the dialogue.

Now let us see how Callicles enters and we cannot possibly read this all. Let us only...You have the...I have it here. Do you have the...

Reinken: "Socrates, you seem to me to be going mad with eloquence,..."

S: No that is...yes, roughly. But let me say a few more words before we come to that. Now Callicles is completely bewildered. Does Socrates mean what he says? Can he mean what he says? For if Socrates were serious, our whole way of life would be completely wrong. Callicles grasps the bearing of Socrates' assertion, which Polus didn't grasp because he was in the midst of the argument. Callicles is more open minded than Polus. And connected with this, the question concerns now no longer merely rhetoric but our whole life. He is more serious than Polus and Gorgias. We can say he is not lukewarm, just as Socrates is not lukewarm. Socrates and Callicles share something which they do not share with Polus and Gorgias. Now what is that? Now let us begin at this long speech of Socrates in 482C.

R: "Soc..."

S: Socrates...

R: "Callicles, if human beings did not have certain feelings..."

S: Yes.

R: "...in common, though they may vary....what one feels."

S: Yes, to show...demonstrate is perhaps too technical a meaning.

To reveal to the other ones own feeling. In other words, Socrates does not suggest a doctrine of empathy. In passing. The question how do we understand other human beings--a great question in modern times, and the most common answer is This is tacitly rejected by Socrates. We understand each other because of a fundamental identity of our natures and then how do we find out? Well, we talk. We talk with other human beings and then we see how much we have in common, also what the differences are. Yes. So, but now what is the meaning, the purpose, of this remark here, the general remark here? Yes?

R: "I state this with reference to the fact....Now I have noticed..."

S: Well, this is a little joke. The son of Pyrilampes had the name Demos, just as the demos. Yes.

R: "Now I have noticed....your experience is precisely similar."

S: Yes. Now, now what is the pathos, the experience, the feeling which Socrates and Callicles share and which by implication Gorgias and Polus do not share? It is called eros. Now eros...In other words, where we would speak of a peculiar seriousness, of dedication, Socrates speaks of eros. He means something different, probably different from what we ordinarily mean by eros but that a seriousness, possibly a deadly seriousness, can go with eros is, I think, still remembered in our time. At any rate it's surely not something lukewarm. But, as Socrates makes clear immediately, while they share this eros, they love different things: different youths and different matters, affairs. Socrates loves philosophy and Callicles loves the Athenian demos. It seems that the two things are mutually exclusive. You must...one must note that he says Callicles loves the Athenian demos; he doesn't say that Callicles loves democracy. That's very important. He loves the Athenian demos...this particular demos, here.

Now, how come...hitherto we have seen Socrates as a lover of justice and what is implied here is that the love of justice becomes necessarily philosophy, love of wisdom. Now, what about the alternative; love of injustice leads of love of the Athenian demos. That is not quite clear. We must...there is some link missing. Love of injustice leads to love of some particular, some particular being, like the demos. Well, the link is very simple. Right or wrong, my country. If you take ordinarily selfishness, how it leads to injustice, that is easy to see. But if you replace simple selfishness by collective selfishness, then it is no longer so clearly visible, because then you can say you dedicate yourself to something greater than you. But the question is whether that is sufficient, whether the principle, right or wrong my community, my country, is sufficient.

Now Socrates claims here, in other words, that his procedure, his preceding argument was philosophic. Callicles, however, denies this. Now let us turn to Callicles' speech, leaving out the end.

S: Literally, "because of the custom of human beings." There is no word for morality in Greek.

S: Let us stop here for one moment. Socrates had claimed that his procedure was philosophic. Callicles denied this. Socrates' procedure was vulgarly rhetorical. That is the point...the rhetorical trick consisted... Socrates simply exploited Gorgias' fear of popular disapproval, and Polus' too, or, he exploited their senses of shame. Socrates acted as a vulgar rhetorician by arguing on the basis of convention as distinguished from nature. And then he develops his own thesis, Callicles' own thesis, at some length in the immediate...let us read only a few more sentences, where you left off.

S: Let us stop here. Now the word...the words which he uses are these: It is not a matter of a man, in Greek The nearest modern equivalent of which I know is *hombre*. It is not English, but intelligent. And the word we use, *anthropos*, from which *anthropology*, etc., are derived, means human being and has a lower sense in Greek. I mean, an *anthropos* is a human being who is not an *hombre*, for example, a slave, or some low class man. Now then...what...let us then see what he says. Suffering injustice is better than doing injustice. This assertion is merely the assertion of the *nomos*, of convention. According to nature, the opposite is true. Doing injustice is by nature both better and nobler than suffering injustice. But not all men are capable of living in accordance with nature. Only *hombres* can, in contradistinction to the weak and many human beings. And the *nomos*, the convention, is the work of the many weaklings. And he develops that in the sequel: They set up equality, in contradistinction to having more, as the norm. And they do it for a very good reason as far as they are concerned, because for them equality is an improvement. Naturally, because they are no longer exposed to the greater power and cleverness of superior men. This right of the stronger is a right of nature, even the law of nature. That is the first time the word "the law of nature" occurs and it is here used paradoxically, because nature and law are antithetic to each other. How can there be a law of nature? The meaning here is that Callicles is so much, without knowing it, under the spell of political conventions, that he cannot conceive of the right of nature except in some legal terms--the law of nature. This explanation is not...wouldn't explain the other use of the term "law of nature" in Plato, which is in the *Timaeus*. We are not now concerned with this. Natural right surpasses conventional right by its splendor, and this splendor is due to that of the superior man. And this is developed with great force by Callicles in the sequel.

Now this passage has reminded modern readers of some remarks of Nietzsche about the superior man, but there is very little in common between Callicles and Nietzsche, and the very simple reason is that Callicles is, as all Greeks were, a eudaemonist, and Nietzsche opposes eudaemonism. Is the term "eudaemonism" intelligible or should I explain it? Eudaemonia is the Greek word for happiness, one of the words for happiness or bliss. And the whole traditional moral teaching was based on the notion of happiness or bliss; whether of this world or the next was a secondary question. But the key point was

the highest good is happiness. And the primacy of happiness was rejected on principle by Kant. And the...especially German moral thought of the 19th century, including Nietzsche, is based on a rejection of happiness as a principle. And therefore we cannot...it is misleading to compare this to Nietzsche.

Now up to this point, which is 484c, Callicles had spoken as a philosopher against the vulgar orator Socrates, who switches back and forth as it suits him between nature and convention. Now he makes another objection to Socrates. Now he attacks Socrates precisely because he is a philosopher, 484c-4. In other words, after having stated his view of the true right or law of nature, he says...

R: "Here then you have the truth of the matter....and have the world look up to him."

S: Well again, hombre, yes.

R: "You know perfectly well that philosophers....they are totally innocent of all human character. So..."

S: Yes. In other words, they are...they lack that which is absolutely necessary for politics, but also, as we have seen, for philosophy. Yes. Now he compares then philosophy if practiced by people who are no longer adolescents to someone who still uses baby talk or such things after he has become mature, and is of course a disgraceful and ridiculous thing. He speaks of lisping here; this is probably an allusion to Alcibiades, who was famous for his lisp. So, to repeat, after Callicles has spoken as a philosopher against the vulgar orator Socrates, he accuses Socrates of being merely a philosopher, of not having transcended philosophy. Philosophy is all right for adolescents but in order to become a mature hombre, one must acquire experience of the major things, of the political and human things, which Socrates completely lacks. And therefore Socrates becomes ridiculous. He even deserves to be spanked,

Socrates whole way of life is the wrong one, for it is altogether unmanly. Socrates and his like are unable to defend themselves, to preserve themselves. And they become the victims of every despicable accuser. They are in a disgraceful situation. Now there is a certain... Callicles' position is not only forcefully and beautifully stated, it has also a certain strength. He takes up the point which was unreasonably

neglected by Socrates, which is the question of legitimate self-defense. But how does it come that he is led from this sober point that a just man should be able to defend himself by speech if he is accused by an unjust man? How does he come from this perfectly reasonable and decent view to his praise of injustice? That is...we must understand. What follows, if you start from the view that the chief consideration is self-preservation?

A: Well later on Socrates asks him, when you say when you talk about preserving yourself, not being attacked, do you mean to do this by getting as much power as possible by becoming the tyrant of the city or being friendly with the tyrant or ?

S: Yes. But still, do we not...have we not read occasionally the man who has...the nerve of whose thought is exactly this point? The consequence of the right of self-preservation. What..I mean Hobbes, of course. What follows, according to Hobbes, from the drive of self-preservation taken by itself?

A: On the cold level of the argument he says you can't be quite sure; you need everything. But I don't...you made the point that he's got something more than self-preservation in mind, that people want to...not merely to preserve themselves, but like Callicles, to live gloriously.

S: Yes but in order to understand Callicles we have to experiment with things which Callicles has perhaps never understood and there Hobbes comes in as the great . Because Hobbes point is exactly this, that the right to self-preservation, taken by itself, necessarily leads to the right to everything, and what else is injustice but to claim the right to everything? I'm not now concerned how Hobbes goes on from here, but this part of Hobbes' argument is of course...would help us. This is quite true. Now you made another point Mr. Reinken. What did you say about what Callicles is concerned with? With...apart from mere self-preservation?

A: Well, I called it living gloriously. He has, he has pride.

S: Yes here there is something of that, but we can also see that in a very strange way that does not come out. That is, I mean...when he makes his initial speech one has this impression. But this...we must drop that. I repeat that Callicles' initial attack on Socrates consists of two parts: first an attack on justice in the name of philosophy, in the name of nature, and then an attack on philosophy. And this...the justification is that for Socrates justice is identical with philosophy. A questionable justification, but to some extent. Now before discussing Callicles' thesis, Socrates makes a general...states in a general way the conditions which must be fulfilled in a good discussion, which leads to the truth. That is at the end of 486.

R: "If my soul happened to be golden....You have them all."

S: Good will--benevolence would be a more literal translation,

meaning benevolence to the man to whom he speaks
Yes.

R: "I've run into many people unable to test me....and more modest than they should be."

S: More...have more ashamed, have a greater sense of shame than they should have.

R: "This must be so."

S: And the implication is Callicles has fulfilled these three conditions and if they agree, then the thing is settled. But no such agreement could be expected in the cases of Gorgias and Polus and therefore the previous sections are not sufficient for bringing out the truth, and in particular the truth about the soul of Socrates. The participants must be wise, benevolent to each other, and frank. These conditions are allegedly fulfilled in the Callicles section. Now, everyone would admit, I believe, that this is an ironical remark and surely regarding Callicles' wisdom. And there is of course and always this great question, how do you know that it is ironical? And that would be too...we would have to prove that. I think one...I would venture to say that what happens to Callicles in the sequel would show that he is not in any strict sense of the word, wise. Now the consequence of course is that the conditions required for a settlement of that issue are not fulfilled in the whole dialogue. They are admittedly not fulfilled in the preceding part; they are in fact not fulfilled in the Callicles part. This remark here reminds of one which Socrates makes in the Republic--one can say the truth which one knows to reasonable friends. Of course it is of no use if you say I tell the truth and I will tell the whole truth if you don't know it. Then you can at best say, I will say what I believe is the truth. Let us disregard this unpleasant difficulty. But you...furthermore, one can say it only to friends, to people who would not use what one says against one, and in addition they must be reasonable men; they must be able to understand. But this implies, although it is not said here, that one cannot...one can say the truth that one knows only among reasonable friends. Because clearly if they are...if A speaks, a wise man speaks to another wise man, and an unwise man is present, God knows what this unwise man will do with what number one said. So that is clear and this is of course of importance for all Platonic dialogues, this remark, not only for the Gorgias, as you can easily see.

Now Callicles had asserted that the better or stronger should have more than the worse or weaker. But this is not very precise. Is better and stronger the same, or differs? Callicles says first yes, they are identical. And then Socrates easily kills this view because the many weaklings together are by nature stronger than the few best and even strongest, the few strongest. Now if this is so, that the multitude is stronger than the individual, however strong, and so on, then it follows

that the laws, which are admittedly made by the many, are by nature just, because they are the product of strength, which is the sole principle of natural right according to Callicles. But the many say, of course, equal rights for all is justice; hence, this is natural justice. What can you do? If the best is the same of the strongest, then the multitude always wins. Is this clear? This part of the...even the modern democratic argument, this question of the sheer power of the multitude as an argument in favor of democracy, is frequently noticeable. It is still remembered in the remark about ballots replacing bullets. You know where the reference to the question of power is still there. Also in Locke's argument about the right of the majority. Why is...on what is the right of the majority grounded? Fundamentally on the greater power of the majority. This in passing.

Now Callicles is then refuted in this first round. He therefore retracts his identification of the better and the stronger. He says now that the better ones are the more sensible ones. The more sensible ones should rule the others and have more than the others, according to natural right. Here the question is not that the more sensible ones should rule the less sensible ones; this makes sense. But why should they have more? Why? And what does this mean? Must they have, perhaps, have such...special houses so that they don't hear too much noise and can work out measures for the benefit of the people and are not disturbed by TV and so on? Or do they...must they have more food and drink than the others? Callicles becomes...and also clothes, of course. What does having more mean? Callicles becomes indignant. By the better men he understood not only the more reasonable ones but also the manly ones. Manly has then the meaning also of courageous, of course. So in other words Callicles doesn't here answer the question yet what should they have more? Socrates leads him on by asking him whether the natural ruler...rulers must not also rule themselves, they must not control also their desires. In other words, whether apart from being manly, they must not also be moderate, or temperate. And the Greek word is...for the virtue, is sôphrosynê, which plays a very great role in /blackboard/...It has a very narrow meaning, for example in Aristotle's Ethics, where it simply means temperance regarding food, drink, and so on. That is a very narrow meaning. It has...it can have a very large meaning when it is understood in opposite...in opposition to madness, for example, phrenia, in opposition to it. Then it means something like sanity, sobriety. It can also be understood in opposition to hybris, insolent pride. Then it means something like, also like something like sanity. And, but it is very common to use it in conjunction with, in distinction from, and therefore in possible opposition to manliness; for example in the first book of Plato's Laws there is a long discussion of the relation of this to virtue.

So Socrates asks then must these better men not also be moderate? Callicles simply denies this. The better men are those who can indulge all their desires, all their maximum desires. This is developed again with great force by Callicles. Now what has taken...what does this mean?

regarded as unjust and suffer a terrible fate and, whereas a very unjust man, who appears to be perfectly just, becomes a pillar of society and is honored and respected by everyone. This is the great difficulty which Glaucon presents there. So, now what about self-control? Again, on the simplest and lowest level, if someone eats too much, what is the consequence of that? Well, he will be punished for it, regardless of whether anyone sees it or not. He will be in his...in strictest privacy, he will have stomach troubles, and so on. So in other words it is much easier to prove that self-control or temperance is good, than to prove that justice is good. Self-control is naturally good, whereas it is a question whether justice is naturally good.

Callicles does not bring out, as we have stated before, the importance to people like him, or apparently like him, of honor and glory. Now why is this not...we can again use a simple formula: somehow in this dialogue abstraction is made from honor or glory. But why is that done? Now what...for what...honor depends on service, true or presumed. People are honored--think of the, of the astronauts, or think of the President of the United States, whoever you take--honor is meant to be a reward for service. Service means, of course, serving others. But Callicles is concerned with ruling only for his own benefit and he is not willing to make this concession that he should...in order to get what he wants he should serve others. This is a characteristic of him. So in other words, if a man is concerned with honor, prestige, distinction, and so on, he is more amenable, in principle, to consideration of justice than if he is not concerned with that. But let us pursue the argument. Callicles rejects moderation or self-control with contempt, as sheer stupidity, and he defends dissoluteness, which he identifies with freedom. We can say he mistakes license for freedom. The many blame dissoluteness or license. Well, the reason is clear: sour grapes. They don't have the ability to get all these pleasant things. If anything is natural our desires are. And that desires are natural can easily be proven, because we desire without being told to desire. I mean, there is of course also a sham desire, that people desire because something...because it is a fashion

But our true desires are in us without being told to desire and also without being coerced to desire. In this double sense desires are natural. Hence the satisfaction of desires is in accordance with nature. The question of how one should live, as now explicitly stated, is reduced to this alternative: moderation or dissoluteness. In other words, self sufficiency, to need nothing, infinite needs, because if you have...must satisfy maximum desire, you are infinitely in need.

Now Socrates tries to persuade Callicles by telling him something which he has heard from a wise man, who was telling myths. And according to that view, what we call life is in fact death, or another expression from the same school--in Greek it is a pun-- The body is a tomb. The body is a tomb. Now if this is so, if what we call life is in fact death, then it follows that the desire for self-preservation is absurd; it means only to prefer death to life. Hence, of course, forensic

rhetoric used for self-defense would be absurd. Now this use of myths, or of images, is a kind of rhetoric, but obviously a good kind of rhetoric. From this it follows that rhetoric is not simply flattery, as Socrates had asserted. Socrates tacitly, but only tacitly, retracts here his wholesale condemnation of rhetoric. There is a kind of rhetoric which leads the soul to health and happiness. But this is here only an inference yet. It will take some time until Socrates will say it explicitly.

Callicles is not persuaded by these images. He says without needs, i.e., without desires, and their satisfaction, no pleasure. All satisfaction of desires is pleasant. And therefore all the other consequences which he had stated. Socrates says, look at another case. What about a man who has an itch and desires to scratch, and scratches to his satisfaction? Well, that is also good, isn't it? Callicles regards this question again as vulgarly rhetorical, but admits that a man who scratches himself will spend a pleasant, happy life. And now Socrates takes a further step: What about the life of catamites? Now Callicles is shocked. There are things which he would be ashamed to do and of which he would even be ashamed to speak. In other words he is not as frank as he claimed to be. He suffers, therefore, a disgraceful defeat. For contempt of convention is his standard. But he does not give up his main thesis, which is that the good is identical with the pleasant, for this very interesting reason. In his view it is disgraceful to abandon ones thesis. A brave man does not leave his post. But contradicting oneself is, of course, not disgraceful. In Callicles cannot be reached by logos, by argument, because of his manliness. You can always...well, the simplest example of course is you just don't listen to what the other fellow says, and then you can never be refuted by him. Now then Socrates makes him agree that knowledge is something different from courage and that both knowledge and courage differ from pleasure. Yet Callicles still maintains that the good is identical with the pleasant. And here is where Socrates' argument turns around this. And what Socrates is trying to show is that by asserting that the good is identical with the pleasant and yet that reasonableness and intelligence, understanding, manliness, and so on, are good, he contradicts himself. Is this necessarily a contradiction? I mean, could...could a hedonist in any way assert that the good is identical with the pleasant and not maintain the value of courage or knowledge, although he admits that they are not in themselves pleasant? Yes.

A: They could be necessary means.

S: Exactly. So they would be not pleasant in themselves, but productive of pleasure. Now this is of great importance for our further study, because in the Protagoras this experiment with hedonism is made and does not fail, and so we have to keep this in mind with a view to that.

Now let us then turn to 495 at the end, e-2, how the refutation goes.

/The next few minutes of the lecture were lost when the tape was turned./

S:....opposite experience, than those who are doing ill?

R: Oh. "don't you think that good and evil fortune....No,they can't; not at all."

S: Good. And Socrates enlarges, generalizes on that that in the case of all good things it is so that we cannot possess the specific good and its specific opposite at the same time, or get rid of the specific good and its specific opposite at the same time. What about pleasure and pain? In c-6.

R: "Then let us return to our former admissions....And the result of this is that what is pleasant is different from what is good."

S: Now what is the nub of the argument? The good and its opposite cannot subsist at the same time in the same respect. But the pleasant and its opposite can subsist at the same time in the same respect, and also getting rid--the same thing. You get rid of the pain of hunger and the pleasure of eating at the same time, when you have eaten enough. This is...then this is the beginning of this...of the proof that the good is not identical with the pleasant.

Now, how is Callicles reaction? Let us read the immediate sequel.

R: "I have no notion what you're quibbling about,...Don't say that, Callicles."

S: Gorgias speaking now, after a long time of silence here.

R: "Don't say that, Callicles....to the end of the argument."

S: Well not quite -- "so that the speeches may find their completion." Go on.

R: "But Socrates is always like this, Gorgias....in any way he likes."

S: Yes. Now what does this mean? Gorgias is eager to hear the sequel and Callicles obeys him. Gorgias has authority over Callicles; this much is clear. But something which is more important: the dialogue is continued for the sake of Gorgias. And there is further evidence in the sequel; I only take here...I only took the first example of that. Now Socrates reminds Callicles of the fact that Callicles' whole argument is based on the distinction between superior and inferior, better and worse men. And Callicles did not mean by better men, men who have more pleasures, and worse men, men who have less pleasures. But the better men are those who possess or lack the ability to procure the pleasures for themselves. And then he gives some...in 497e ff., where he shows that especially in the case of courage and its opposite, cowardice, it is by no means true that the more

courageous man has more pleasures than the cowards, and...but on the contrary. So in other words a manly man, a better man, is not distinguished from a worse man, by having more pleasures. From Callicles' principle that the good is pleasant, cowardice would have to prefer to manliness. Well, the cowards get more excitement from life than solid and stolid, solidly and stolidly brave men, and of course therefore also more pleasant reliefs. I mean, a man who is constantly in fear, and many of these fears prove to be unfounded, has lots of pleasures which the courageous man lacks. Now the self-contradiction of Callicles consists in this: If the good is identical with the pleasant, the only thing which counts is a pleasant life. Whether this pleasant life is due to one's power or ability, or to mere luck or accident, would not make any difference. But for Callicles it does make a difference. He has...he genuinely admires the *hombre*; and there is a contradiction between this admiration for the *hombre*, this concern with the resplendent, grand, beautiful, noble, and his hedonism. If Callicles did not have this admiration he could not be refuted; he could not be reached by *logos*, by argument. A man who knows of nothing but of the satisfaction of his desire for food and drink could not be refuted. This is of some interest with a view to the present so-called social science relativism. All values are subjective; whether you take those...the filling of your belly, or whether you take something admirable, doesn't make any difference. The only question is, can a man who truly believes this, and not merely says he believes it, be a social scientist? Can he understand human beings? Can he understand himself as a scientist without seeing in science, in reason, something high? And must he therefore not be open to the question whether there are not other things which are also high, namely intrinsically superior to filling one's belly? But this only in passing. Let us turn to 499b. The speech of Callicles.

R: "It's quite a time now, Socrates,...that some pleasures are better and some worse!"

S: Yes. Now Callicles says now, why do you take all these troubles, Socrates; it is wholly unnecessary as far as I am concerned. But why did Callicles not say so earlier, and have...would have saved the trouble? Well, on the earlier occasion he acted as a manly man; he defended his whole territory--didn't budge. Now he abandons some territory with grace and this is an entirely different thing, that is becoming. You are a child, Socrates. In other words he claims he has fooled Socrates, and that means that he has been victorious, in spite of the refutation. This reveals, of course, his character. Callicles grants, now, that there are bad pleasures. This is of course not necessarily incompatible with hedonism because bad pleasures can simply be pleasures which are followed by pains, and therefore the desirable pleasures are the pure pleasures, pleasures not followed by pain. This is...that will also be discussed in the Protagoras.

But Socrates argues in a different way. If there are bad pleasures, hence we cannot take our bearings by the pleasant, but only by the good. Because the fact that something is pleasant is not a sufficient reason for

choosing it, because it may be a bad pleasure. Therefore there is a radical difference between the good and the pleasant and we have to take our bearings by the good alone. Now this is then...this has...Socrates develops then the consequences of this regarding rhetoric, even regarding the whole life. Let us turn to 500a, the speech of Socrates.

R: "Let us, then, recall my remarks to Polus and Gorgias....Should it be the one to which you urge me..."

S: Well this is here that no more general question, and more fundamental question, for man is...for man's life is thinkable. How should one live? But this question is immediately specified in so far as it is asserted that there is only one fundamental alternative. Yes.

R: "Should it be the one to which you urge me....Call. I certainly don't."

S: Now what is the alternative as stated here? Either the present political life, which means life in a democracy, or the philosophic life. Now this clearly does not exclude the possibility that there may be another kind of political life, which is compatible with philosophy. Rhetoric is presented here as belonging to the present political life, meaning a simply bad, as you have seen. But it is still a question whether the distinction between the two ways of lives is valid. Now the question is next presumed to have been settled in the discussion with Polus. Let us see; we come most to the key point, in 501d. Socrates repeats again these sham arts, the flatteries or knacks, consist in merely gratifying men, instead of improving either their bodies or souls. Yes? Is this true in the case of a single soul?

R: Yes. "And does this hold for one soul only....without taking into consideration what is best?"

S: "without taking into any consideration" would be the

R: "Yes, I imagine so....that it seeks our pleasure only and has no other object? Call. Yes, I think so."

S: Now there come a number of other arts of the same kind, a kindred kind, and at the end of it, at 502b, this is a....Yes.

R: "And what about the effort of that stately marvel, tragic poetry?...pleasure and the gratification of the spectator."

S: Well, in other words, the case of rhetoric is in a way changed by this remark, because the status of rhetoric is apparently not different; not inferior, to that of poetry, and even to that noble kind of poetry, tragedy. The problem of rhetoric appears now in a very different light. Of course

someone can say, that's not surprising; we all have read Plato's Republic and the criticism of poetry there. But this is only a reference from one unknown to another, because we would have to know what this criticism means. So on the...Socrates will make clear in the sequel that tragedy is even lower than rhetoric. Now that is in paragraph 2-d. Rhetoric is a kind... is speaking to the people, to the demos.

R: "Then poetry is a kind of public address....whether this procedure makes them better or makes them worse?"

S: So tragedy, in a way the highest form of poetry, is lower than rhetoric, because tragedy is addressed to children, women, and slaves, as well as to free men; whereas rhetoric addresses itself only to free men. You see here...when he says here at the beginning of the passage which you now read, "some kind of rhetoric." This is already a key point. There are various kinds of rhetoric. Contrast this with the blanket condemnation of rhetoric in the Polus section. And there is also a new criterion, as we have seen now here. The political rhetoric gratifies the hearers for the sake of private gain of the orator. One could of course wonder, could there not be a political orator who gratifies the demos, yet at the same time thinks of the common good? Why this extremism, that the pleasant and the good cannot possibly come together? Let us read the reply of Callicles, which follows immediately.

R: "This question you are asking....but there are also others such as you describe."

S: And you see, now Callicles again entirely sincere; because he is interested in politics--there is no question. He replies not merely for the sake of Gorgias, and he doesn't play with Socrates. He takes the side of the decent, public-spirited orators, contrary to what he implied in his low speech regarding the true hombre. This is the genuine Callicles. What is behind this self-contradiction? Public-spiritedness is concern with the common good of the city of Athens, ordered democratically, because that is the context in which he would work. Therefore he must have love for the Athenian demos, as Socrates says he has. Again we must understand this in the sense of collective selfishness. Right or wrong, my city. And now then there is this proclivity from collective selfishness to private selfishness, is understood here. In other words, someone, at first glance a patriotic, public-spirited citizen has nothing in common with a man concerned only with his private gain. But from a stricter point of view they have very much in common, because they do not allow of any principle higher than selfishness, collective or private. The mere patriot, in the sense of right or wrong, my country, is a much more respectable man than the merely selfish one. But he doesn't have the root of the matter in himself. Therefore, this proclivity. This is beautifully developed in Thucydides, if one reads him properly. The tyrant city Athens, an imperialist city, and its connection with tyranny pure and simple. Now let us consider the sequel, where we left off.

R: "That's good enough....became better than they were before?"

S: Let us stop here. This will then be taken up later where Socrates says that these men of the past, the great men, Themistocles and Pericles, Cimon and Miltiades, were also bad; the most radical condemnation of all the glories of the city of Athens. This is here only prepared, but we must not over...This is a very sensational piece in the Gorgias. But we must not overlook the key event which has silently taken place in 503a. Socrates admits now for the first time that there can be a rhetoric which is a genuine art, and we know already its general purpose. It must make men better, the citizen better. But he also says this noble rhetoric does not, at least not yet, exist. What is the consequence? But it is obviously possible, it seems. What must we do, if it does not yet exist? Pardon?

A: We must make it.

S: Yes. We must make it. And then the question...Surely. And then we...But who will make it? Who will make it? It must be a man of some, of some great gifts obviously. But who? Who is the most likely candidate? Pardon?

A: /Inaudible/

S: Socrates, in this case. Yes. Now what must he be able to do? After all, we must see whether he can do it. How could we test Socrates' ability to produce a true and noble rhetoric? He must be able to make the Athenians, and especially of course the politically active Athenians, better. Now here in this dialogue we see him attempting to make such a man better and...namely, Callicles. Polus is of no interest because Polus is a foreigner. But Callicles is an Athenian. And what does Socrates achieve in his conversation with Callicles? Pardon?

A: Deadlock. Callicles is...

S: He silences the thing. He can easily refute him, but he does not make any dent. So Socrates clearly fails. I mean if he cannot refute Callicles, who is relatively well...well intentioned toward Socrates and not an abominable character, he is only very confused, what will happen in the many other cases? So Socrates, I am afraid, will not fill the bill. But there is someone here who, to whom Callicles listens more than to Socrates. Gorgias. What about Gorgias? The whole dialogue is made for the...for Gorgias. Socrates, we can say...While Gorgias' rhetoric is not exhibited, and not even Gorgias' view of rhetoric is exhibited, Socrates' rhetoric and his view of rhetoric are exhibited. And they are exhibited in the Callicles section, at any rate, as not sufficient. Could it not be that the purpose of the dialogue as a whole is to say to Gorgias, this is the kind of thing you should do, instead of the wholly frivolous things which you are doing now. I mean he wrote, for example, a praise of salt and a praise of Helen, this ambiguous woman. But if he would make another kind of speeches, which would have an effect on the

Athenian demos, or at least on its leaders, then it would be something useful. In other words, if this is so, and I believe that is the case, then the dialogue would present in a clear manner the limitations of the Socratic art. But Socrates says that ...indicates by stating that he can...is only good at dialogue, at short speeches, as distinguished from long speeches. The public, public oratory, is impossible. Now there is one particular case--I would like to mention this now--of a rhetoric which is especially important. At the end of the dialogue we have a myth. This myth, however, is explicitly said to be not a myth, in Greek, but a logos. And whatever this may mean, it surely means it is simple truth and not imagery. And this describes the punishment of the wicked after death. And the speech is rather...doesn't have the slightest effect on Callicles. But the question is, could not other... men other than Socrates, could not say this famous orator and rhetorician, Gorgias, perhaps produce fear inspiring speeches, inspiring fear of hell, which would induce men like Callicles, or could induce men like Callicles, to that? Socrates could not do that; it is beyond his power. This, I think, this lesson the dialogue conveys. Now...yes. I think it is of no use to go on. Is there...would some one of you like to bring up one of the other points? Mr. Dry.

Dry: A test of the extent of Socrates' ability would be whether or not Gorgias would catch on. How would we be able to determine whether, whether Socrates rhetoric would be effective to the point of teaching Gorgias the proper thing?

S: Well, that is a very good question. And Plato has therefore given us the answer. You know, Plato is a very decent writer. He does not create difficulties for us which he does not enable us to solve. Otherwise it would just be tricky. It is sometimes not easy to do that, and I mean, one has to know quite a few things which not everyone knows. But in this case it is simple because there is a sequel to the Gorgias, we can say--the dialogue Meno, in which we see what Gorgias did after all. He did not obey Socrates' suggestion. So, in other words, it is a gamble, a hope for the future that sometime someone, with the gifts of Gorgias, and with the modesty which Gorgias doesn't have, namely to do what Socrates tells him. It is the same problem, exactly the same problem as regards poetry in the Republic.

poetry is condemned unqualifiedly, you know, and in the tenth book even more than in the second or third book. And yet, if one thinks a bit about it and reads more carefully, one sees that poetry is not simply condemned, but it is only condemned if it claims to be autonomous. If it is in the service of philosophy, if it is ministerial to philosophy, then it is all right. The same is true of rhetoric. But where do you find poets who are willing to minister to philosophy? Not in our age. In the past there were some, some very great. Dante is the most obvious example. But there were also others. But at any rate, the problem is fundamentally the same and the fact that Plato, or rather Socrates shifts here the issue from rhetoric to poetry and back shows that we are confronted with the same problem. Yes?

Q: Why do you think that Gorgias' view isn't fully brought out by...Why do you think Gorgias' view isn't fully brought out by Plato?

S: That is not a matter of what you call now thinking, but a matter of brute fact.

Q: No, I mean what is the reason Plato doesn't bring fully out...

S: No, I mean the whole issue...the complete issue of rhetoric, the full issue of rhetoric, is not brought out here. For example, the very important question of legitimate forensic rhetoric, without which we could never understand Socrates' own Apology. A general rule:...Well, first I have to say something to explain away what I meant by general. I mean there are only a small number of Platonic dialogues which I believe I have understood. I do not believe that there is anyone now living who can claim more than that. I mean, he may understand other dialogues much better than I do. But I don't believe there is a single one in the world who can claim he has understood all dialogues as they must be understood. Therefore when one makes a general rule, one...I must always say, on the basis of my limited experience. We cannot help that. The term which is ordinarily used in social science is that you have to make hypotheses. You can also, but...this word has been so grossly abused that I try to avoid it. Now then, after this explanation I'll say then, the general rule that in every Platonic dialogue something very important for the subject matter of the dialogue is disregarded, is abstracted from. And the understanding of the dialogue, the adequate understanding, would consist in seeing what is abstracted from and why it is abstracted from. I mean for instance in the dialogue Euthyphro, the word soul never occurs, although it is necessary in given passages that it should occur; it would be the natural word, a word which Plato frequently uses. The question arises, why? I could answer that question in the case of the Euthyphro. It would lead us too far. In the case of the Republic, I believe I have shown that there is a certain abstraction from eros, characteristic of the Republic. Not that it is not mentioned there; it is mentioned. But it is played down. For example to mention one point, when Plato... Socrates speaks there of the needs which induce men to enter society, the perpetuation of the species is not mentioned. The tyrant, injustice incarnate, is called eros incarnate. This kind of thing. And I have tried to explain that. So there are...there...here in the Gorgias we see a whole dimension is abstracted from and the disregard of these forms of rhetoric which are so obviously necessary--even after all deliberative rhetoric is necessary if you want to have a republican commonwealth. I mean the extremism of the Gorgias, its radicalism, complete separation of the philosophic life from the political life, and no combination of the two, this is the point one would have to understand. And I think we will be able to make some progress to that when we study the brother or sister dialogue, the Protagoras. Good.

The primary subject of the Gorgias is rhetoric, but this subject recedes somehow. It is overlapped by the question of how man should live and in particular whether suffering injustice is better or worse than doing injustice. One may therefore say, in order to find a unity in the dialogue, the subject is not simply rhetoric but just rhetoric, just speeches. There is another Platonic dialogue dealing with rhetoric--the Phaedrus. The subject of the Phaedrus is very clearly erotic speeches, both rhetoric and erotic speeches. So the comparison of the two dialogues leads us to see the fundamental difference, of which we are aware, I suppose, anyway, but we see it as a great central Platonic theme, justice on the one hand, eros on the other. Which does not mean that these two things are mutually exclusive; but they are different. The relation, however, is obscure. Now Plato has taken up this difference on the grandest scale by writing The Republic on the one hand, and The Banquet on the other--Republic devoted to justice and The Banquet devoted to eros. Plato has then devoted two works, two dialogues to rhetoric. Aristotle wrote at least...to speak only of what is surely genuine and preserved, a single treatise on rhetoric. Aristotle treats rhetoric entirely by itself in isolation; there is no question of erotic speeches in Aristotle; compared to Plato he deals with various kinds of political speeches. Aristotle treats rhetoric in isolation. Plato, we may say, never treats a subject in isolation. And this explains the difference. To this one of course could make this objection, that the different dialogues have different subjects--say, just speeches, erotic speeches--so he does treat subjects in isolation. Let me therefore make my statement somewhat more precise. Plato never treats a subject in isolation from the question of how one should live. When Aristotle deals with the parts of animals he is only concerned with the parts of animals, and the question of how one should live is not immediately present. And the sign of the fact that this is the true situation, that Plato never treats a subject in isolation from the question of how one should live, the sign of that is the presence of Socrates in all dialogues. Socrates, whatever he may talk about, presents this question. If I say Socrates is present in all dialogues I seem to have said the thing that is not. What is the objection?

A: The Laws.

S: The Laws. Yes. I admit that. But I would also say that I believe a deeper study of the Laws would show that Socrates is present in The Laws under one assumption, that he did not follow the order of the laws to undergo capital punishment but escaped from prison, and then he would have gone to Crete and do his good work there. But this would need of course a long proof.

Now let us complete our account of the Gorgias. Rhetoric is condemned as unjust on the basis of the view that the only thing which counts, the one thing needful, is justice, disregarding completely the bodily and external goods, abstracting from them and...as well as from pleasure. The fundamental distinction of the good and the pleasant in such a way that every concern with pleasure seems to be wrong. Why? I mean, what is the basis of this

possibility? Answer: If life is death, if the only true life is the life after death, and happiness after death is reserved for the just, and this is more or less the meaning of the myth--the so-called myth--at the end. But justice does not mean quite the same in the Gorgias as it would mean to every... to all men of all times and ages. Justice is somehow identified with philosophy, which is surely not the generally accepted view at any time. And of philosophy Socrates says on his day of death in the dialogue called Phaedo, philosophizing means learning to die.

Now this whole strand implies the otherworldliness; implies the depreciation of the city, because the city is of course essentially and radically this world. But there is also another strand in Plato's thought and we will come across it by taking up a key passage in Plato's Laws. Mr. Reinken would be so good, and to do his pleasant duty. In the first book of The Laws, 631b-7. Should I find it for you?

Reinken: No, I think I have it. "For they are true laws..."

S: No, the beginning of the speech of the Athenian.

R: "Oh stranger--thus you ought to have said--...Now goods are of two kinds,..."

S: They supply all good things, all good things. Yes?

R: "human and divine....the lesser goods are those of which..."

S: Did he say he requires the greater? The city which requires the greater.

R: "The city which requires the greater...and verily the lawgiver also must so rank them."

S: That's all we need. The point...you see you have here an order of four human goods and four divine goods. The human goods are the bodily and external goods and the divine ones are the goods of the soul. And here Socrates, or the Athenian stranger, rather, says, the goods of the soul are the necessary and sufficient condition of the other goods in this life--because in another life there wouldn't be body and wealth. In the center of the Republic Socrates says the rule of the philosopher-king will make cease evils from the city and the human race altogether. And as he states shortly afterwards, the philosophers live already in this life the life of the of the blessed. In other words this passage in The Laws and the Republic and of course many, many other utterances show that Plato has a very high regard for the polis, which, for the polis as this-worldly thing. These two strands must be considered equally. And there is always the danger that one forgets one for the other--the other-worldly or this-worldly to state it very simply. In the Middle Ages--Christian Middle Ages--the other-worldly Plato was much better known

than the political Plato. In our age, of course, the opposite is true. And we must keep both in mind.

Now this tension or contradiction occurs also within the Gorgias. On the one hand rhetoric is rejected as downright injustice. And on the other hand it...we observe a certain rehabilitation of rhetoric. Rhetoric is rejected as a flattery, a kind of flattery. And on the other hand it is admitted that rhetoric can be a genuine art, but does not yet exist. And it is the art of making the citizen just by means of speeches. But what about...so this is quite political. But what about rhetoric which is used for ones just defense against unjust accusation? Is this also flattery? Or can this be art? Is the concern with such defense not just and reasonable? Callicles tells Socrates that he...Socrates will be the victim of every scoundrel if Socrates doesn't take care of his defense by rhetoric, which saves his life. Let us turn to, in the Gorgias, to 511b7. This is...after this question has come up this...Callicles says, now is this state of affairs that you are helpless over against every scoundrel, is this not a matter, a proper matter for indignation? What was Callicles answer and what was Socrates?

R: "Socrates: Not to a man of sense...And very sound advice it is, too."

S: He swears by Zeus, by the way.

R: "Well, my good sir, do you also regard ability to swim..."

S: No. Ability to the knowledge of swimming.

R: "knowledge of swimming as an important accomplishment..."

S: As something grand.

R: "Good heavens, no."

S: He swears again, you see? So he is very much present; it's no longer a conversation for the benefit of Gorgias but his own vital problem is involved. Yes?

R: "Yet swimming saves men from death...Navigation is a modest..."

S: But obviously you cannot by swimming save large chests of gold. Go on.

R: "Navigation is a modest art...in a quite unassuming way."

S: Now this is developed very amusingly and forcefully in the sequel; we cannot read that. We limit ourselves to this. The key point is this. Granted that forensic rhetoric can save a man's life and he may not wish to live til 80, say a man of 20 or 30 could be unjustly accused and one could not blame him for being unreasonably concerned for his life. Forensic

rhetoric is as lowly an art as swimming, piloting and as he makes clear in the sequel, generalship, which saves the city, or medicine. And that is a crucial step. Forensic rhetoric is an art. Swimming is an art. And the other things are arts. Although nothing grand. Callicles unreasonably regards some of the life-saving arts as high and others as low; rhetoric as high and swimming and piloting as low. He would never give his daughter in marriage to a pilot or...but of course to a general he would. But that's very unreasonable, as Socrates makes clear. Callicles is under the spell of that convention which he claims to despise. He contradicts himself. He is concerned with life-saving above everything else and at the same time he is concerned with being a courageous man. Now courage means exactly the virtue which controls and limits our desire to live, the willingness to die for something. And this is one of the many contradictions which he has. But, if forensic rhetoric, as is now clearly admitted, forensic rhetoric, not the high rhetoric which Socrates claims to have, why does Socrates not practice it? For this we must turn to 521d-6.

R: "I believe that I am one of the few Athenians,...what I say on any occasion..."

S: The true political art, the true political art. Pericles and Themistocles--they had a sham political art. And all the others, except Socrates; he is a true statesman. Yes?

R: "So because what I say on any occasion...that a court so constituted would raise."

S: You see he...you see here he cannot say the truth. If he were to say the truth there would only be an outcry. Yes?

R: "Perhaps it would...either that I am the ruin of the younger people..."

S: To corrupt the younger ones, to keep more literally to the ordinary translation of the formal charge. Yes?

R: "corrupt the young people by reducing them to a state...no defense will avail me."

S: More literally, I would not again not be able to say the truth. Yes?

R: "The truth being simply that in all that I say...but to submit to my fate, whatever it may be."

S: Stop here. Socrates explains here why he does not use the art of forensic rhetoric. Precisely because he has practiced the true political art, which is the true rhetorical art, he cannot save himself through forensic rhetoric, however justly used. The people will not understand him and therefore it is useless for him to say the truth to them. This implies, of

course, that his true rhetoric will have been almost completely or completely ineffective; because if it had had any influence on the citizen body, there would be perhaps a majority who would acquit him of the accusation. And this incidentally is important because he accuses Pericles and Themistocles and the others that they have made the people worse, the Athenian people worse than they were, because after they have given them all the benefits they gave, wars, navy, empire, they were accused by the people whom they benefitted. Now Socrates, too, tried to benefit the Athenian people and had the same fate as Pericles, Themistocles, and so on. This is of course not stressed, but must be noticed.

Socrates denies, or at least does not grant, that rhetoric is to be used for self-defense. He does grant that rhetoric is to be used for self-accusation, or for the accusation of ones friends, ones nearest and dearest, and ones city. I draw this inference: The self-defense of Socrates, of the philosopher, is possible only as an accusation of the city. This he may do. For by defending himself the philosopher would recognize the polis as judge on philosophy. He would recognize the polis as a tribunal which rightfully calls philosophy before itself. He would recognize the polis as an authority to which philosophy is subject. But this is clearly, as the Greeks would say, against nature--that philosophy would have to be responsible to the polis. The only just thing is to question the authority of the city, to call the city before the tribunal of philosophy. To accuse the city, which does not recognize philosophy, i.e., to use accusatory rhetoric--accusatory rhetoric is of course also a form of forensic rhetoric. But can the polis understand the claim of philosophy? The implication is no. But with the qualification that the city might understand it, namely, if the peak or core of philosophy is disregarded, then the citizen body might get some inkling of what philosophy is. Now in the Apology and Crito, of which you doubtless have heard and many of you have read them, in the Apology and Crito Socrates does recognize the authority of the city and of its laws. In the Apology because he defends himself against a formal charge in a formal law court; and in the Crito he says no, I must not stealthily run away from prison because the laws are sacred and must be obeyed. In the Gorgias he questions the authority of the city without, however, making fully clear the character of philosophy. Needless to say he makes the character of philosophy much less clear in the Apology and the Crito. In the Republic, however, he makes the character of philosophy fully clear. And the answer is there. He gives the solution to the conflict between city and philosophy. The philosophers must rule, i.e., the city as such must be absolutely subject to philosophers, the alternative being that the philosophers are subject to the non-philosophers, which is against nature, to use this phrase. From the Gorgias the conflict between philosophy and the city appears to be insoluble. The solution suggested in the Republic--the philosopher-kings--is not considered in the Gorgias. Perhaps alluded to, but not more.

Now, one can of course say, how do you know that the conflict is insoluble? Is this not a very, as they say, pessimistic view of the situation

a prejudice as much as the opposite optimistic view? The insolubility of the conflict between philosophy and the city is demonstrated ad oculo, to our eyes, by the only Athenian citizen with whom Socrates converses in the Gorgias, that is, Callicles. Here you have a man who is not particularly biased against Socrates or against philosophy, but yet you see how he reacts. Socrates has no influence on Callicles. But Gorgias has. The question thus arises, could Gorgias not tame the Callicleses of various levels, the city, so that if...so that the city would let Socrates live and even listen to him? Hence there must be, there ought to be another rhetoric, as distinguished from vulgar rhetoric as ordinarily practiced, from just forensic rhetoric, and the true rhetoric, which Socrates claims is necessary. There must be another kind of rhetoric which tames the demos, the citizen body as a whole, by ingratiating itself with it, by appealing to it. This teaching of the good, which has nothing to do with the pleasant, would have this effect of the physician giving bitter pills--simply repulsive. And we have seen that Gorgias spoke when he went with his brother to a patient that the brother could not possibly convince the patient to undergo an unpleasant operation or whatnot; the rhetorician Gorgias could do it without knowing anything of medicine. Such... the dialogue Gorgias, we can say, is an appeal to Gorgias to do that, to, as it were, to mollify the demos like Orpheus mollified the beasts, so that they will let men like Socrates alone and do their work.

This interpretation is indirectly confirmed by the situation in the Republic. The...I have said already before that the Republic consists of three parts...consists of three parts in many ways, but I mean in one particular way. There is the father-son conversation with Cephalus and Polemarchus in the first book, then the Thrasymachus section, and then, finally, the brother and brother section, Glaucon and Adeimantus, Book II - X, the bulk of the work. Now the Gorgias is built up in a strictly parallel way: first, the dialogue with Gorgias, then with Polus, and then with Callicles. So Thrasymachus is here in the center occupying the same center position which Polus occupies apparently in the Gorgias. Now this Thrasymachus is a very...has a certain similarity with Polus because he is also rather savage and Polus is the Greek word for colt, untamed, not broken in. And Thrasymachus obviously very savage as you see from the very beginning. In spite of that Socrates says somewhere in the fifth or sixth book that he and Thrasymachus have become friends, why they never were enemies. The context in which he makes the remark is when he shows how one could tame the demos, persuade the demos of the worth of philosophy. So here is...Thrasymachus fulfills the function there in the Republic which Gorgias is meant to fulfill in the city at large. Needless to say that Thrasymachus is here in a very select company of a few people where it is very easy to win compared with the market place.

To come back to the point I made. So rhetoric is absolutely needed in order to bring about a reconciliation--some reconciliation--between philosophy and the city. But this reconciliation requires that philosophy undergo some obfuscation. Philosophy as such cannot be reconciled. The condemnation of rhetoric in the Gorgias is linked up with a scheme according to which the

(Writes on blackboard; -inaudible)

S: That is all we need. You see, here he speaks of the form, the same word which is ordinarily translated by idea. This is the same word which Plato Socrates does not say that the craftsman, and hence also of course the legislator, looks at the idea which he tries to impose

on the matter. That he looks at the order, the idea which forms the shape, is only in the finished product. He looks at the taksis, at the order when he brings forth a form, say of the shoe or table; there is no transcendent idea there. Which means the doctrine of ideas, the famous doctrine, does not come out in the Gorgias. And that would mean on the simple and superficial level on which we have to argue first that since for Plato philosophy is above all the doctrine of the ideas or forms, that philosophy does not come up.

Now, a bit further on in 506b, like baby.

R: "Go on my good sir and finish on your own....are good by the reason of the presence of some excellent quality, are we not?"

S: Of some goodness.

R: "...some goodness...now the excellence of anything..."

S: The goodness.

R: "...the goodness of anything..."

S: The word is the word arete, which we ordinarily translate by virtue, but which has indeed the meaning of goodness or excellence. Yes?

R: "...whether it be an implement or a physical body...but springs..."

S: It doesn't come to the...in a random way. Yes?

R: "...but springs from a certain order and rightness...and if orderly disciplined by good sense."

S: Or moderate.

R: "Unquestionably. So the disciplined soul is good after all. I can't see any other conclusion, my dear Callicles, can you?"

S: The excellence or virtue or goodness of any thing or being is due to order (taksis) and cosmos (ornament). A soul which has received this by the...by the art of the true statesman is cosmir--that's the adjective of cosmos, derived from cosmos; is adorned. And this has in Greek in practice the same meaning as moderate...he is well ordered, is well ordered. Which means, which will become clear from the sequel, virtue is reduced to moderation, in contradistinction to justice.

Now we come to the key passage to which this turns. But remind...I must remind you of the word cosmos which is here hitherto used in a perfectly common-sensical way, and can mean the simply external adornment say of a

woman, and can of course also mean the good order introduced say into a room or into a table or any other thing. Now let us turn to the key point--507c, where the new paragraph begins.

R: "That then is the position that I adopt...must pursue in practice self discipline..."

S: That is

R: "...moderation and run as fast as his legs will carry him... and without social life there can be no love."

S: Friendship would be a more literal translation, but love is not entirely incorrect, of course. Yes?

R: "We are told on good authority, Callicles,...are held together by the bonds of society..."

S: No, a bit more literal." That heaven and earth and gods and human beings..."

R: "...gods and human beings are held together...and that is why the universe is called an ordered whole..."

S: That's no good. "And this is the reason why this whole is called cosmos..."

R: "...called cosmos...geometric equality plays in heaven and earth."

S: Among gods and men.

R: "...among gods and men....of unfair shares."

S: Of, in other words, of getting as much as you can. So. This is the last passage of Gorgias which we absolutely need. So here a study of the cosmos, cosmos was a relatively recent term at that time, means literally ornament, something adorned, beautiful. But this is here linked up with the notion of geometric equality, of proportional equality. With a slight exaggeration we can say, mathematical cosmology--this is the basis of the true rhetoric or politics. This is the genuine thing, of which sophistry is the perversion; not the legislative art. The legislative art is much lower in rank, because as we have seen last time psychology is necessarily the basis of the legislative art, but psychology as the psychology of man can only be part of a larger whole, namely, the cosmos. This is the utmost extent to which the character of philosophy is revealed in the Gorgias --in this passage. By the way, does this remind you of something else you know of Plato? Mathematical cosmology? Yes?

A: Didn't his Academy have a sign about you have to know geometry to come into my school, or something?

S: Yes but...this is true but there is a work. Yes?

A: Is it in the Republic where he has the figure of the line and divides it into the...

S: That is not...the matter is something very obvious. One of the...in the Middle Ages the most famous Platonic work was the Timaeus, and the Timaeus develops this mathematical cosmology. And it is no accident, I believe, that the term law of nature occurs in Plato only in the Gorgias when it is used by Callicles, and in the Timaeus where it is used by Timaeus. This only in passing.

The study of this cosmos, of this whole, this whole,...there is another whole--leads to cosmiosis /?/, to the quality of being cosmios, i.e., orderly, which is the same as moderate or self-controlled, and which is here presented as the root virtue. But the question of course arises, is mathematical cosmology the highest; are not the ideas higher? And in this connection I remind you again of the fact that the Gorgias which has to say so much about justice never raises the question of what justice is, so that we are in a way always in the dark what they are talking about. But in a very general way we know it, in a common-sensical way, but that is surely not sufficient.

We may say...draw this conclusion, that the rehabilitation of rhetoric goes together with the revelation of philosophy as mathematical cosmology. We must say at least a word about the dramatic situation. The important change from the simple condemnation of rhetoric to its rehabilitation is somehow rendered possible by Callicles, by Callicles' appeal to nature in contradistinction to convention. Callicles realizes the necessity of appealing from what is by convention just or noble to what is by nature just or noble. This appeal is the work of philosophy. But he also says that after one has discovered what is by nature right and noble in one's youth, one must turn to grander things. And now you know it. What should you further bother about it now? You lead the just life, meaning the life of self-aggrandizement in his case. Philosophy is not the right kind of life. And this is clearly the opposite of Socrates, whose view one can state as follows: The natural right--that which is by nature right--is the life devoted to philosophy. Hence the discovery of natural right keeps one with philosophy. This is not clear? Whereas if the natural right is not philosophy then one turns away from philosophy to the practice of this natural right and that...whatever that may be. Now Callicles' primary motive has appeared from a passage to which we have read in 511d...may be said to be this, a very noble one or a respectable one: The philosopher is, like Socrates, is helpless against his persecutors. He is animated by moral indignation that...a man like Socrates should be at the mercy of

every scoundrel. Philosophy...the philosopher must...philosophers must enable themselves to defend themselves against their enemies. Is it not reasonable? But then a strange thing takes place. The action taken on behalf of philosophy in order to defend it should remain subordinate to philosophy. But in Callicles' case it becomes more important than philosophy itself. And that is the fundamental contradiction here. One would have to study this carefully, which we cannot do here, namely that there is a way which leads from the perfectly sound and just self-defense of the better man especially to the right of the stronger. And this is explained at some length in the Gorgias. What can he do in order to defend himself? The better man must, in order to protect himself, must assimilate himself to the powerful, to the strong. And then that is of course the beginning of the end, because he will then...such assimilation corrupts him, naturally. He must be useful to the strong, otherwise they would not take care...take any interest in him. And how can he be useful to the strong unless he adopts their ends, which are not his ends? He must, to use a present-day phrase, he must become an ideologist of the regime. But...this is very good and necessary, I suppose, but it is of course not philosophy. So this is all I wanted to say about the Gorgias. And before I go on I must make a longish speech, but in order not to make a mistake I must look at the time.

/The next few minutes are lost while the reel was being turned.
The second reel begins in the middle of a question from a student./

Q: ...prospect for developing the new rhetoric since he seems to be persuaded by Socrates and he's also a student of Gorgias?

S: In other words, why is Polus persuadable?

A: No, why...You maintained that the dialogue was directed to Gorgias. I was wondering whether there was a possibility that Polus might develop the new rhetoric?

S: No. Gorgias is a much greater, more gifted man. That is a very simple thing.

R: You did point out that Thrasyarchus, the man who corresponds to Polus.../next few words lost due to fault on tape/

S: Yes, that is true, but still Thrasyarchus was a greater man. I mean one can easily see that from the survey of the most famous rhetoricians which Plato gives in the Phaedrus. Thrasyarchus was...let us say very simply, more gifted.

Q: In the section of the discussion with Polus where _____ said that the ... punishing justly, punishing would be a just action and since

it wouldn't be beneficial to the punisher it would be pleasant; that was the implication. And that sort of indicated that Polus would have his place in a good society as sort of a prosecuting attorney or something . ?

S: Well, there are internal....I mean, once we have realized --which is not so easy, but which one can--that the best regime simply, absolutely according to nature, according to which the best men should rule, is the rule of philosophers, once we have realized that this is not only improbable, because if it is probable we still might try to get it, but that it is strictly speaking impossible, then we have...of course, then we would know a crucial truth about the polis as polis, why the polis as polis simply is incompatible with the notion of rule by philosophers. Then we would have to accept, to cling to the Platonic line--you must understand this intelligently or symbolically--we must have...we must accept a society with private property, with inequality of the sexes, and some other unfortunate things. You know? And then of course, then naturally there will be law courts, that goes without saying. And then there is of course the question of whether a decent man, simply because he is inarticulate, will not have a ghost of a chance against an articulate scoundrel. There must therefore be honest men who are willing, for remuneration, I fear, to defend that poor man before a law court. And this is a perfectly respectable profession. As we all know. If it is truly practiced in the spirit, which is not always the case. And then...surely. And that is the basis of Aristotle's Rhetoric. Since he admits these common-sensical propositions he says well, let us see what a good forensic orator has to know and what he has to do. But needless to say Aristotle doesn't go into the question, in the Rhetoric, what...the question as to the place of forensic rhetoric, or for that matter, any other of the ordinary rhetorics, occupy in the whole. And that is clear from Aristotle's point of view. They are rather lowly arts. You know, more akin to swimming, or medicine, than to philosophy. Mr. Dry?

Dry: Was Socrates' sharp distinction between the pleasant and the good consistent with his aim to teach Gorgias the true rhetoric which would have to ingratiate with the many?

S: It was a condition for him. And to that extent...this way: If the rhetoric of a man like Gorgias, or say Thrasymachus, should practice is one which tames the demos by ingratiating itself with them, this ingratiating doesn't mean that they would flatter them. That can very well mean that they appeal to their fears. You know? But still...they assimilate themselves with the demos. Now this ingratiating with the demos...this consideration of the pleasures and pains as ordinarily considered, presupposes the distinction between the pleasant and the good. The highest form of rhetoric would not be concerned with ingratiating in either sense. It would only be concerned with the good. Just as the physician would say, you have to undergo this operation, and whether it is painful or not is irrelevant, that's the only way in which you can get rid of your cancer, or whatever it may be. And where...

a secondary art would come in in the suppose of anesthesiology, I suppose, and would say how can we make it as little painful as possible, which is of course a perfectly sensible thing. Socrates would not deny that. But in order to give their proper rights to the good on the one hand and the pleasant on the other, you must first distinguish them. And...is this not clear? And the second point, which is equally crucial, is that the good is the higher consideration than the pleasant. The very simple, common-sensical truth--we do not admire people for their pleasures. We can perhaps envy them, but we do not admire them. We admire them for their goodness in the wide sense, for their excellence. To take the most simple example, the parallel question regarding self-preservation. The highest good in some we-regarding point of view, in Hobbes, for example. The simple argument against that, that this is a very powerful thing in man, no sensible man would ever deny. But can it be the controlling, the over-riding situation? And I think common-sensically speaking we all know some men who are dead, and we do not admire quite a few people who are alive. So being alive cannot be the highest consideration. This has to be deepened somewhat, but I think it has some weight. Good.

Q: his teaching was too harsh in order really to be effective in getting adopted, strange that Thrasyarchus could be persuaded in a dialogue that goes to the peak of justice, and in a dialogue concerned with teaching Gorgias how to use the proper rhetoric, somehow the discussion of justice is too harsh to be accepted, too much...

S: Yes, but because it is a matter...The point is this. Thrasyarchus becomes in a way persuaded. More literally, he becomes tamed by Socrates. He becomes tamed. Now Gorgias is also tamed, very soon. You see that he is a hopeless victim in the hands of the supreme dialectician, rhetorician, Socrates. Let us not...This is a very important question, the comparison of the Republic and the Gorgias, but we cannot go into it.

I would like now to make a transition to what we will do now. From now on we shall turn to a close study of the Protagoras. Now how can we justify this? After all, we are here in a political science department; I believe most all of you are political science students. No, no. No, I saw that. And...well, to...how can we justify it? We who live within the turmoils of 1965 confronted with such pressing questions as Viet Nam and the Civil Rights issue. In both cases we find groups of men fighting for their interests--I take now a very unpatriotic view of the South Vietnamese, or of the South Vietnamese Communists, rather. They are groups of men fighting for their interests, and at the same time appealing to ideas. Is it not hopeless to expect any light from Plato for the understanding of these contemporary phenomena? After all, Plato in his analysis of the political man in the Gorgias reduced the political man to the lowest possible denominator, you remember? He is either a man concerned with his belly and nothing else. That would be as grossly unfair as trying to explain a phenomenon like Stalin in terms of the famous suppers at the Kremlin, with lots of vodka and caviar, of which you all have read, and also in terms of the glee which he

felt when he heard of the execution of his opponents--there are some ghastly stories about that. But still I would say, however abominable that man may be, that simply is not sufficient for understanding it because there are other people who have these terrible qualities and are...lack certain qualities which Stalin possessed.

Now if we look then...Now how could Plato go so far in depreciating the political man as he did in the Gorgias? Now the revolutionary movements of our time all point back to the French Revolution. The peculiarity of the French Revolution was well described by Burke in well-known passages, by Hegel--you remember what we read, in the French Revolution man for the first time tried to stand on his head--but let me read to you a man somewhat closer to us, who has been a very close student of the French Revolution, Alexis deTocqueville, in his book on the ancien regime. "All civil and political revolutions have had a fatherland and have closed themselves within the fatherland. The French Revolution did not have a proper territory of its own. On the contrary, its effect has rather been in a...so to speak to efface from the map all ancient frontiers. Read all the annals of history; you will not find a single political revolution which has the same character. You will find it only in certain religious revolutions. The French Revolution is a political revolution which has operated in the manner and which has in a...way taken the aspect of a religious revolution. Look by which particular traits and characteristics it achieves to resemble to religious revolutions. Not only does it expand outside as religious revolutions, but like them, it penetrates outside through preaching and propaganda. A political revolution which inspires proselytism, which one preaches as ardently to strangers as one accomplishes it with passion at home,--consider, what novel spectacle. Among all unknown things which the French Revolution has shown to the world, this is surely the most novel. The French Revolution has operated with regard to this world precisely in the same manner as the religious revolutions act with a view to the other world. It has considered the citizen in an abstract manner, outside all the particular societies, just as the religions consider man in general independently of country and time. The French Revolution has sought not merely what is the peculiar right of the French citizen but what are the duties and general rights of men in political matter." And then I read to you only one more heading of a chapter later on; "How it came that toward the middle of the 18th century men of letters became the principal political men of the country and the effects which resulted from that."

Now in developing this it becomes clear...Tocqueville makes clear that these men of letters called themselves and were called philosophers. So this...the French Revolution is the first revolution tending toward the regeneration of the human race by its own power in this world. The first philosophic revolution. That is same thing what Burke of course said very early. I just took Tocqueville for some reasons of convenience. Hence the French Revolution was based on a new...since both politics and philosophy existed long time before the French Revolution, the French Revolution was

based on a new view of the relation of philosophy and politics. It cannot be understood if one does not see it in contrast to the old view. The old view, one can say, the pre-French Revolutionary view, expected less of politics than the new view--for example, no regeneration of the human race. Now this has of course...this is a simple historical fact which I think which I think everyone will admit. But it is not completely deprived of practical consequences regarding the issue, the basic issues of our time. The issue is this: What kind of solutions can possibly be expected, whether it is in foreign affairs or in domestic affairs, this is the fundamental question. Whether such goals as the regeneration of the human race, to use the phrase used by Tocqueville, you can also use other ones, is a possible goal of politics.

Now the closest approximation to this new...well, it goes without saying that this view didn't emerge with the philosophes of the 18th century, French philosophers, but the least, one would have to say, is to read Descartes, who has been called rightly the grandfather of the French Revolution. And...but still it was even older. The closest approximation to the new view within earlier philosophy is in a way Plato's Republic, especially Book five. That is, the philosophers become kings, evil will cease...the implication is the evil, all evils will cease from the human race. So this much is clear. If we want to have the greatest possible clarity about what is going on before our eyes, we have to dig in and go back to the thought of the past. Are we then to say that the radical change within philosophy, political philosophy, is at the bottom of what is going on today in Viet Nam and in Selma, Alabama? I'll read to you another text which I brought with me, and this is Karl Marx, from the German Ideology; I have it here only in German, unfortunately. Well, "the fundamental thing is the life forces (the social and economic forces), also the formations of thoughts in the brains of men are necessary sublimations of their life forces, which is, of their material life forces (meaning, concerned with tangibles) which can be studied and observed empirically and which is bound...based on material presuppositions (material meaning, again, tangible). Morality, religion, metaphysics, and other ideologies cease to have the appearance of independence. They have no history. They have no development but the...but men who develop their material production and their material exchange change together with that also their thoughts and the product of their thoughts. It is not consciousness which determines life but life determines consciousness.' You may hear the phrase 'consciousness by thought.' Thought...it is not thought which determines life, but life determines thought." Now let me see. "Wherever speculation, metaphysically, stops, namely when we come to real-life, the real positive science begins, the presentation of the practical activity of the practical process of development of men. The mere phrases of consciousness stop; genuine knowledge must take their place. Independent philosophy loses its medium of existence at the same time that this presentation of reality comes to the fore." You all know these, but I thought I should remind you

of the very formulations of Marx. Philosophy is only a weak reflex of socio-economic changes. And this view has of course had a terrific success beyond Marxism itself. But is it an accident that such reflexes are produced? Not at all. Marx says it is necessary. Man is, after all, strange as it may sound, a thinking animal; he cannot help producing these brain... foggy notions in his brain. Yes. Very well. How do we know that the philosophies are mere reflexes of the socio-economic process? With all due respect for Marx his saying so doesn't settle it. We have...I discussed in an earlier seminar on ...a detailed study by a Marxist--I think I can say this without any hesitation, I am sure he is not a card-carrying Communist or anything like that--MacPherson's book on possessive individualism; he means chiefly Hobbes and Locke. We discussed it at some length. Now he, following the Marxist principle but carrying it through in a way which is not ordinarily carried through by Marxists, observes contradictions in the doctrines, say, in the Hobbian doctrine, and asserts that this contradiction can be explained only by the fact that Hobbes identified society with capitalist society. Here we see the dependence of philosophy on a specific stage of society. Well, I do not wish to assert my view of MacPherson's proof; I would only say, all right, let us see. Nothing...as Socrates used to say, nothing like having another look at it. In order to prove the Marxist interpretation of the history of thought we have to begin with studying the doctrines as such, the manifest things as ... that which is first for us. Even if Marx is right that it is not the first in itself, that the first in itself are the socio-economic conditions...but Marx doesn't claim that he had the divine revelation. He claims that this is a matter which can be rationally decided. Let us do that. I think we...I believe this simple reasoning is unimpeachable. That even if Marx were right, it would be absolutely necessary to...to test it, and to test it would mean to study the history of thought in its own terms. And now, there is a very simple further step. If we have to...study these doctrines, we must study them properly, and not in a glib, rash manner--properly, exactly, carefully. I will give you another example...I will give you an example rather far remote from what we are reading this quarter, but because the principle is truly universal. One of the most discussed classics of political philosophy in this country is Locke's Civil Government, but very few students of Locke's Civil Government ever study the first treatise; you know the book consists of two parts, the well known positive work is the second, the first is a critique of Filmer. But Locke himself says right at the beginning of the work that the...but it's too long to read. All these premises...well, no, he says that the whole second treatise is based on the argument of the first. How can one neglect it? That no one today is interested in divine right of kings--there are no longer any kings around to speak of--doesn't mean that it wasn't of crucial importance to Locke. I mean I regard this as absolutely elementary. And I hope you see that point, that if it is for one reason or another necessary to study Locke---if if if--but if it is, then one has really to make an effort to understand Locke, and not a figment of our...of our imagination, which means Locke who doesn't care, who is in no way interested in the issue of divine right. So this is I think a good starting point--we must study carefully. But here a great

difficulty arises. What degree of care? Does it make sense to apply the same degree of care in the case, say, of a pamphlet printed in a revolutionary exciting epoch which has already of no importance the next day, or a book of this magnitude? A superficial and narrow pamphlet doesn't deserve the care which a profound and deep work deserves. And then there is another difference, which is also important. If we limit ourselves only to the worthwhile books there are books which set forth the doctrine in a straightforward manner. There is Hegel and many other...and John Stuart Mill, of course. But there may also be books which do not set forth the doctrine in a straightforward manner. Prior to examination we cannot exclude them.

Now this is clearly the case of Plato. In his dialogue Phaedrus he speaks--which is the dialogue on erotic speeches--he speaks of the essential defect of writing. Writing is a bad invention. Socrates didn't write books. The dialogues...but Plato did write them--the dialogues. Hence, I conclude the dialogues must be writings which are free from the defects of writing. What are the defects of writings? As Socrates says in the context, writings say the same things to all readers. And the implication is writings should not say the same things to all readers. The Platonic dialogues are meant to say different things to different readers. But to speak with a view to the capacity, character, social standing, and all the other things which may be important of a man--ad hominem, with a view to the individual--this is one strict meaning of the word irony in Plato's language. So in this sense all Platonic dialogues are ironic, which doesn't mean of course the silly notion of irony that if you see a limping man and say "what a wonderful runner"--that goes without saying. But if we...if we start from this, then of course it is a very great question how can we find out what Plato meant in a non-ironical way, i.e., what he would have told us if he had made sure that we are serious people sufficiently prepared. And the answer to that is given also in the Phaedrus. Every...Plato speaks here of the thing which he calls logographic necessity, the necessity governing the writing of speeches. And of course, books are only written speeches. In a good book, as Plato understands it, everything is necessary; also the place where it occurs. And therefore these works have to be read with the utmost care. And therefore if I seem to lose myself and to induce you to lose yourself in what at first glance looks like my rude observations I can only ask you, be a bit patient. From my experience hitherto I have seen that it pays to be patient. But it takes some time sometimes to see it. I believe even if you would study now exactly the most exciting things in South Viet Nam or in Selma, Alabama you would also have to develop a habit of patience to get the full truth out of it. And so therefore the request is not unequitable.

Plato's Protagoras: A course by Professor Leo Strauss in the Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 4 April 7, 1965:

Well, let us then turn to the Protagoras. I warn you that we will be going into very great detail. But I think after having given fair warning in advance, I am not obliged to repeat it all the time.

Now let us begin at the beginning. The dialogue is called Protagoras. We must reflect for one moment on the title. Why is this title chosen? Of course only those who have ever looked at the dialogue could possibly answer this question... Well, why is the dialogue called Crito, Yes?

Student: Well it is a discussion Socrates has with Crito. This is mainly a discussion with Protagoras.

But here you say mainly. The Crito is not a dialogue mainly with Crito.

Student: Oh, no.

So, well, the general rule is that Plato never calls a dialogue with the name of Socrates, with one big exception.

Student: The Apology.

Apology, yes. The Dialogue is the Apology of Socrates. The name occurs only in the context of the Apology of Socrates, nowhere else. If there is a single interlocutor, there is no question. It will be called after that single interlocutor. But if there are more than one, Plato had to make a choice. In the case of the Protagoras, the choice of Protagoras was a matter, of course, given the substance, because it is chiefly a conversation with Protagoras. The case of the Gorgias is somewhat different because the conversation with Gorgias is only a short, small part, a very small part of the conversations in that book. But here, it has a special reason because the whole dialogue is addressed, the dialogue is with other people, but the dialogue is addressed to Gorgias. So you see one has to make distinctions here. Now in the case of the Protagoras for example, there are two equally outstanding men, Protagoras and Pericles. It is a great question why is it called Protagoras because Since Pericles is much more of an intellectual figure than Protagoras. And Protagoras is a very sophisticated man and yet it is called after that non-intellectual man. That would be a question we cannot discuss here.

Now the dialogues have, in the tradition, sub-titles. There is no proof that they stem from Plato. But some of them at least were already used by Aristotle. So they probably, some of them at least, go back to the immediate

environment of Plato himself and therefore we should treat them with some respect. Now what is the subtitle? Yes?

Student: "The Sophists."

"Sophists, yes. The Gorgias is called in the sub-title "On Rhetoric." The Protagoras is not called "On Sophistry." That is of some interest. Sophistry is surely not the explicit theme of the Protagoras, as rhetoric is the explicit theme of the Gorgias.

Now let us remind ourselves briefly that the Gorgias is about the relation of sophistry and rhetoric. In 19c the Sophists claim to be teachers of virtue. Who is supposed to be the teacher of virtue, according to the ordinary view? Because the Sophists' is an unheard of claim (that there are individuals saying we are the teachers of virtue.) Who raises the claim ordinarily?

Student: The laws.

The laws, yes, is the best answer. But still what is the answer of Socrates given in the Gorgias as to who is the teacher of virtue or what?

Student: He is.

No, no, Not Cri... Well, yes he is in a sense. But he has a more peripheral answer.

Student: The statesman?

No.

Student: Rhetorician?

No. But in that schema to which I have frequently referred, what is the art which makes the soul healthy, that teaches virtue?

Student: Legislation.

The legislative art! But there is a great difference between the legislative art and the laws because some laws may have been made by smatterers in the legislative art or by apprentices, you know. Therefore Socrates does not simply agree with the view that the laws are the teachers of virtue, only laws properly made; the province of the legislative art. Sophistry of course is meant here in the Gorgias to be a perversion of the legislative

art. But you see now the reason--because the sophists claim to be teachers of virtue, true teachers of virtue.

Gorgias 520a to b, the sophist and orator are identical, or at least very close to each other. Callicles thinks that rhetoric is altogether noble or splendid but despises sophistry. In fact Socrates says sophistry is nobler than rhetoric, just as the legislative art is nobler than the art of judges or of judging. I do hope you remember that simple schema that Socrates gave in the conversation with Polus. Can you repeat it for the benefit of those who have forgotten it?

Student: For body and soul there is an art that builds up and an art that restores. For the body gymnastics builds up and medicine restores. For the soul legislation builds up and justice as punishment restores. The shams are sophistry for legislation and rhetoric for justice.

Yes, very good. Now this is very strange that Socrates says that sophistry is nobler than rhetoric because it is a perversion of the nobler thing. That seems to be absurd because the simple rule is that the corruption of the best is always worse. So the corruption of kingship, tyranny is the worse and the corruption of aristocracy, which is oligarchy is also. That is very strange. At any rate, if he takes his statement seriously and disregards the difficulty just pointed out, sophistry would deserve a higher degree than rhetoric to be treated as such, because it is more interesting higher. But it is not treated as such which seems to be indicated by the sub-title, "Sophists" and not "On Sophistry."

But we have also seen in our survey of the Gorgias that there are various kinds of rhetoric, the lower one which is simply a perversion of something else and a very noble one and then this would lead us to the question can there be a noble kind of sophistry? A question which does not come up at all in this dialogue. But there is another Platonic dialogue explicitly devoted to the sophists, the dialogue entitled "Sophist," in which there is indeed a presentation of the noble sophistry. There are seven

definitions of sophistry given and the central one presents noble sophistry. So, we will later on see this more clearly. Now the first point which must strike us at the beginning is that whereas the Gorgias is a performed dialogue, or as they say a dramatic dialogue, the Protagoras is narrated, narrated by Socrates; like some other dialogues, e.g. what is the most famous dialogue narrated? The Republic. But as you see if you look at the beginning of the Protagoras is that it is a narrated dialogue that is preceded by a brief performed dialogue between the narrator, Socrates and a nameless comrade. Now I translate it by comrade in order to make it clear that this is not a friend, although in loose usage the word can also be used for friend. It also has certain political connotations--the crux of the oligarchs who were dissatisfied with the democracy were also called comradeships. Well, comrade of course also has as we all know a political connotation in our time, but no longer on the part of oligarchs in the ancient sense.

Presented from the same point of view is the dialogue Euthydemus which is narrated by Socrates and preceded by a performed dialogue between Socrates and Crito. But it is not only preceded by, but also interrupted and concluded by that performed dialogue. That is not exactly the same. The interesting thing is that Euthydemus also deals with sophists but the sophist of a particularly low order, clowns almost. I mention in passing the Phaedo and Symposium which are dialogues narrated by men other than Socrates, and preceded by a performed dialogue between the narrator and someone else. So these are the closest dialogues to the Protagoras from that point of view.

Now let us turn to the beginning and we will read.

Student: "Where do you come from Socrates?"

From where do you come? It could suggest that he comes just sudden out from the earth! And you will see that in a sense that is true! And we will see later on that Socrates was in Hades and no wonder he will come out from there. But this we cannot prove yet. Now begin.

Student: From where do you come ~~from~~ to sight Socrates?
And yet I need hardly ask the question for I know that you have been chasing the prime of

youth, the prime of youth of Alcibiades. I saw him the day before yesterday and he had got the beard like a man, and he is a man as I may tell you when you are near and I thought that he was still very charming.
What of the beard?

Yes, well it does not become very clear. Now you see as you will see later, the comrade and others are present. The comrade and the other silent comrades are intimates of Socrates. They know Socrates' private life. And they can talk to him about it, so much so that they can blame him for some aspect of it, politely and courteously of course, if he does something wrong. Socrates choice of Alcibiades is sound in itself, I mean there are no objections on the part of these upper-class men to his chasing the beauty of Alcibiades but only one little point, you see he is a little bit too old for that, so he says when I saw him the day before yesterday, he seemed to be beautiful, a beautiful man. Socrates presents himself as the lover of Alcibiades and of philosophy, in the Gorgias, here we see him only as the lover of Alcibiades. So as we see, the normal Athenian only slightly abnormal his love is slightly to open.

Student: When they say love, they don't mean friendship like Jonathan and David do they? Do they mean homosexual love?

I am afraid so. This does not mean...this is a very dire question...how shall I say...this does not say how corporeal it was, that is very hard to say but this did exist in Athens less than in Sparta. Did you ever read the story of Alcibiades? At the end of the banquet, he wanted literally to sleep with Socrates, you know in the slightly metaphorical sense and so it was only a ...but I cannot apologize for that because I am not responsible for that.

Student: What did this do to Socrates control of his passions?

Socrates does not go into that! In other words, The Greek word for sexual intercourse literally means "being together" but being together with someone very soon came to mean "a lecture". How come? In other words there is an intimacy of the mind and this intimacy was something which Socrates cherished in a number of cases, in some cases he did not cherish it. And it appeared externally to people who did not know Socrates as a desire for corporeal intimacy he couldn't help and he

did not care particularly about it because it did not then run counter to what was then considered feasible. But he...that is one of the most striking differences between Classical Greece and the Bible, you know according to Mosaic law that is an absolute abomination. But when you read the laws which Socrates presents or the Athenian stranger presents in Plato's Laws he is no less strict than Moses, you could say. So it is a kind of playing here with a socially accepted practice.

Student: But how can Socrates want to mean or want a theme of the mind on the body...Alcibiades is thirteen, how could he have a meeting of the minds?

No, he must be older than thirteen at that time. Sixteen or so. I have not made any study of this question but I believe he is somewhat older.

Student: I've heard a very wise man say at the age of forty-four that he couldn't be the friend of his teacher who was fifteen years older because of the wisdom his teacher had in excess of him. And we've heard it from Aristotle that when one man has brains in quantity different from another they can't be friends. How can Alcibiades possibly be the friend of Socrates?

You rush! Let us go step by step. But here we are only concerned with the one little question, "How can Socrates tolerate it that people make this superstition about him?" One can say that Socrates did not regard it as indispensable on every occasion to disapprove of mores which he regarded as fundamentally Christian. And after all in every society there is...are questionable from every point of view, not only the sphere of sex but in other things and that is sheer peasantry and so Socrates would do it at the proper occasion.

Student: Then why does he put it in and make such a big to-do over it?

But as indicated by this word meaning "being together" this becomes a symbolism and...Aristophanes speech at the banquet is based...love of young men was regarded as more political, as related to the polis and higher things than love of women. That had to do with a fundamental question, the estimation of the two sexes. Generally speaking, I apologize to the ladies, the female was regarded in former time as being inferior to the male sex.

And that led to the very term paternal power as opposed to parental power. The Bible said "honor mother and father" not just father but still people spoke of paternal power and it was based on the excellency of the male sex, which could happen in individual cases that the mother was superior to the father. But this was somehow an unnatural situation that the woman should really be able to control the household. Now this leads to all kinds of depth and deeper questions and therefore Plato's suggestion in the Republic that the two sexes should be equal is a very great paradox, and treated as such in the Republic. Now, that women as such should be kings and rulers is what is meant. Now if we look at the history of mankind up to the present day we are in possession of facts which Plato did not know but Plato has been born out to some extent. There have been some famous female rulers. Catherine the Great, Elizabeth the First, and some others and in business which is related to politics somehow also very great businesswomen and so on. And so the notion of female rulers is not absurd as Plato says. But what about the other side, female philosophers? Now if you look at the history of philosophy and look at the galaxy of men who surely belong to the top shelf, they are all men. Poets are a different story. But in philosophy that is so. Well I explained this once to a professor of philosophy at another university and he said, "What about Susan ?" And I said, "Well, I am sorry I forgot about her." She was a British logician and quite a respectable woman. But she herself would not claim that she would belong to the top shelf. So the male sex is more related to the common concerns, politics in the first place and this is somehow mirrored on a comical level in everyday life. Does it make sense?

So to come back here to the point, Socrates presents himself here not as the true statesman or the other things we have seen in the Gorgias or as he presented himself in the Apology as a man with the mission but as a practically normal Athenian only slightly abnormal because Alcibiades is slightly too old. Now how does Socrates get out of that fix?

Student: "What of his beard? Are you not of Homer's opinion who said youth is most charming when the beard first appears and that is now the charm of Alcibiades."

So Socrates proves his complete normality or correctness by the authority of Homer. Homer has said that this

particular age is the most charming. Now the word in Homer is applied to Hermes, the god Hermes. Alcibiades has the peculiar charm of Hermes, the god of the thieves among other things. I thought that Alcibiades was used as a model for statues of Hermes and he was thought to be engulfed in the mutilations of the Hermes statues in 415. Now 415 is much later than the date of this dramatic dialogue but of course Plato's role is much later. But it must make dramatic sense. And the dramatic explanation is that Socrates represents a divination and could very well have anticipated this model for Hermes was dissatisfied with statues not devoted to him but to Hermes. But this is only a . . .

Now one of the two...the words to which he alludes occurs twice in Homer, once in the Iliad and once in the Odyssey in Book X. And in the quotation in Book X this passage occurs shortly before the sole mention of nature which ever occurs in Homer. In this passage, Hermes teaches the nature of a . . . Now I ask this question, could Hermes, like Alcibiades, be by any chance the teacher of Socrates? This would of course presuppose that just as Alcibiades is Hermes-like, Socrates is Odysseus-like. That is an open question. I would not raise this question if I had not some suspicion that it will be later suggested that Socrates is in some way, in this dialogue, an Odysseus.

So at any rate, Socrates has refuted the charge that he did something abnormal by the authority of Homer. Now what did the comrade say?

Student: "Well and how do matters stand now? Have you been visiting him? And what are his feelings toward you?"

He says "And how is the youth disposed toward you?" Now you see the comrade is beaten. He calls Alcibiades now a youth, no longer a man. Otherwise he returns to his initial question, do you come from him? But he is no longer certain as he was at the beginning that Socrates comes from Alcibiades as a matter of course. It is a question. Now, accordingly he adds a second question, how is Alcibiades disposed toward you? Because if it is not so certain anymore, maybe you had some bvers quarrel in the meantime. Good. Now how does the rest...

Student: "Good I thought and especially today for I have just come from him and he has been helping me in an argument. But shall I tell you a strange thing? I paid no attention to him

at several times I quite forgot he was present."

Yes. Now Socrates answers first the second question and how Alcibiades was disposed towards him, then the first where he comes from. Alcibiades' condition toward Socrates is unchanged so why should he not come from him. But strangely, Socrates' disposition toward Alcibiades is changed, at least for the time being. Socrates barely noticed him and this of course is a very remarkable, big event. If there had been someone like Walter Winchell in Athens... Now let's go on.

Student: "What is the meaning of this? Has anything happened between you and him? For surely you cannot have discovered a fairer love than he is? Certainly not in this city of Athens."

Yes, "certainly not in this city." So they ask in a perfectly proper way, what an extraordinary event! The biggest news in town! The only possible explanation of course is that Socrates has met some youth who is still more beautiful than Alcibiades. But there is no more beautiful youth than Alcibiades. Perhaps not even in the world. Now...

Student: "Yes, much fairer."

"What do you mean?" "Athenian or a foreigner?"

"A foreigner."

So Socrates did meet someone more beautiful than Alcibiades but indeed not an Athenian. Therefore the reputation of Alcibiades as the most beautiful Athenian is unimpaired. Yes...

Student: "Of what country?"

"Of

"And is this stranger really in your opinion a fairer love than Alcibiades?"

Now you see the comrade is incredulous. As you see from his last speech. And so beautiful did that stranger seem to be, to you so that he came to sight, which also connotes "seeming" as more beautiful than Alcibiades. And so he is suggesting that Socrates was the subject of an optical illusion in seeing someone more beautiful. Yes...

Student: "And is not the wiser always the fairer?"

It is not strange really that Socrates paid no attention to Alcibiades because the most wise is bound to be more beautiful than Alcibiades. The neuter is important because it does not say, the wisest man, because the wisest is not necessarily a human being. It may be logos, speech and this might appear to be wiser. The adjective which he uses here in addressing him first of all underlines a fact that the comrade remains nameless. Socrates knows, of course, his name but it is never used. It means literally translated, "you blessed one" but has of course now sunk down and does not have the full meaning. I would suggest that we, to understand it, "how blessed you are," by virtue of the fact that you are wise. That is obviously ironical. Now let us read the next passage.

Student: "But have you really, Socrates, met with some wise one?"

"Say rather with the wisest of all..."

Wait! Wait! "Did you meet..." Now how shall I translate it? The stranger admits without difficulty, that is important, that the wisest thing is more beautiful than mere beauty, and in particular the mere beauty of Alcibiades. I would say what he implies here, because he uses wisest in the positive not in the superlative, we, you, and I are of course not wise. Socrates is not wise. That is what is implied. "You have met a wise man!" This is a rarity. They do not belong to this group of people.

Student: "Say rather with the wisest of all living men, if you are willing to award that title to Protagoras?."

"What is Protagoras in Athens?"

"Yes he has been here two days."

"And do you just come from an interview with him?"

"Yes..."

We'd better stop here. Now the comrade does not know that Protagoras is in town, obviously. And Socrates does not only know it but has already met him. It is safe to say that Socrates is more of a "intellectual" than the comrade. He knows of the movements of these famous men and much earlier than they do. Yes...

Student: "Yes and I have said and heard many things."

You say he says "said" first. He emphasizes the fact that he has spoken in the being together with Protagoras. He thus emphasizes the difference between himself and the comrades who only listened, as will become quite clear.

Student: "Then if you have no engagement please do sit down right here and tell us about your conversation..."

Yes but the word used is "being together" which means here....has here indeed the meaning of conversation, but it has this ambiguity which I pointed out.

Student: "And my attendant here shall give up his place to you."

"Why do you not tell to us," which means there are a number of people present, just as there are a number of people present in the conversation with Protagoras, as we shall see soon. And from this we learn already one point that in the conversation immediately following with Hippocrates, which is in the center of the dialogue, because first there is the conversation with the comrades and then the conversation with Hippocrates and then the conversation which makes up the bulk of the work with Protagoras. The central one is that with Hippocrates and this is the dialogue that Socrates is alone with one man. He is together with many in the first and the third.

It is clear that the comrade and the others will only hear the story, they will not speak. He is eager to hear, obviously. Of course, since he is a polite man, unless Socrates is detained then he naturally would forego the pleasure of hearing him.

Student: "To be sure I shall be grateful to you for listening."

So, Socrates is eager to tell them and they are eager to hear him. And he is of course not detained. Now in order for you to understand that, let us read the very end of the dialogue.

Student: "Socrates I am not of a base nature and I am the last man in the world to be envious. I cannot but applaud your energy and your conduct of an argument. As I have said, I admire you above all the men I meet and far above all men of your age. And I dare say that I would not be surprised if you were to become one of those

who are distinguished for their wisdom. Let us come back to the subject at some future time of your choice. At present we had better turn to something else."

"By all means" I said, "if that is your wish, for I too ought long since to have kept the engagement of which I spoke before and only tarried because I could not refuse the request of the noble. So the conversation ended and we went our way.

So, what about this engagement of Socrates? That was a white lie. Socrates had plenty of time but immediately after having left the conversation with Protagoras he tells this story of the conversation with Protagoras. So it is not easy in any way, his leisure is infinite. Of course it also shows the tremendous memory of Socrates, that he can tell the whole conversation with all its incidental details as it happened. Memory is regarded very highly by Plato as you know from the Republic and other places.

Student: Why did you mention a few minutes ago that... the point of the dialogue with Hippocrates that it was the only one Socrates had alone and was the central, the central conversation? Why was that important, that it was the central conversation?

This is a good question and one which I am certainly glad to answer, because it gives me an opportunity to display my ignorance. The importance of the center I know only empirically, in the good old sense of the term empirically, meaning I know the fact without knowing the reason. I just stumbled on it and was amazed by it and I don't know why. Now I learned this, I observed it for the first time in some passages in the first books of Plato's Laws where were enumerated three things which seemed to be presented in the order of descent, one to three. And number two proved to be most important. And I took of course for granted that number one was most important because of its higher rank. And then I said that it seems to be that what is in the center is most important, which doesn't mean most important absolutely because clearly it was not most important absolutely in this case. But in the context. And this has been confirmed in my studies of Plato, of Xenophon, and of Thucydides, and quite a few ancient and even later writers. There is never any reason given but I came across some indirect

reason. For instance, in some late writings on forensic rhetoric, they produced this rule: if you defend a fellow against an accusation, you bring in his weak spots in the center, because at the beginning people are more attentive and at the end as everyone knows, and as everyone who has ever given a lecture knows, people are sound asleep when we say, "Now I come to my conclusions." And therefore you know when they listen you speak of his strong sides and when they are asleep, you speak of his weak sides and you try to make the best of it.

And there is another thing. In Xenophon's remarks about tactics, military tactics in the strict sense, (how to build up a fighting unit) the good men come in the front line and in the rear. And the cowards in the middle, for the same reason. They can't be trusted.

In other words, this means in the first place the weakest things come in the middle, that is a tactic common to both tactics and forensic rhetoric. At which are the weakest in the broader sense? Those which are least publicly defensible. They may be much higher in rank... And after this has become an established thing, then it is so to speak lives on its own power and you make it a rule to do that. There are minor difficulties if for example the things enumerated are or consist of an even number. Then it is obvious you have to take the two center one as important. If there are ten you must take five and six. This is the things which I can only say I have found very helpful in many cases. I could not prove or start building an argument about it but if I find something very strangely in the middle, I would keep it in mind and see whether something did not turn up which gives me some light. It is a principle not something which you can mechanically use. Yes?

Student: I always thought the reason for putting the earth in the center of the universe was that this position must be such an important position that it could not be reserved for anything else but the most important body.

Yes! And also generally speaking the link between two things. Well if you take the link between two extremes is also in the middle. I know that but these are then the most important, the most important absolutely I mean.

Student: I don't see why he says the earth must be in the center to be the most important? To update it you must put the earth...

Yes, that's true. Well, I have not considered that and I have never been induced by anything I ever saw to think of that. But maybe it is important. But these things from forensic rhetoric and tactics I observed and I have been concerned since with other things.

So let us read the end now again of this dialogue with Hippocrates. "And I will thank you if you listen."

Student: "And I am grateful to you for listening."

"Thank you too for telling us."

Yes, well, the thanks, the grace will be two-fold.

Student: "Last..."

No, no. "And now listen." We have seen by looking at the end of the conversation, of the dialogue, that the conversation with Protagoras is unfinished. We will see it more clearly later. And it is unfinished not through Socrates' fault because Protagoras is exhausted, is tired.

Now from this brief conversation with the comrade you see that Socrates' narrative is voluntary to the highest degree. He is eager to tell. We will see that his conversation with Protagoras is compulsive to the extent that he is compelled by Hippocrates, this young man, to go with him to Protagoras. And this is quite interesting that a dialogue may be compulsive. And that the report about it may be voluntary. I believe that you all have observations of this kind to make that you had an experience that you did not at all enjoy but was exhilarating to tell about.

You see also that the comrade asks him, asks Socrates, to take the place of the attendant, of the slave of course. To take the place of a socially and intellectually inferior. That is suggested.

Now, to summarize, this tells us to whom, i.e. to what kind of people the Protagoras is narrated. There is a difference between the men addressed by Socrates within the dialogue and the men addressed by the dialogue. Is that clear? Now the men addressed by the dialogue are in a sense of course the readers. The addressees of Socrates and the addressees of Plato are not necessarily identical. Now if you take the Crito, the addressee of the Crito in the Crito is Crito of course. But also the Crito is addressed to us. And if the narrator of the dialogue and the chief interlocutor of the dialogue are identical then the difference is blurred but nevertheless

still visible. Now what kind of man is the dialogue to? We have made some observations about that comrade. He is obviously friendly to Socrates. How deep that friendship goes, we are unable to figure out because we have not seen them in a tough situation. He is an admirer of Alcibiades' beauty, not entirely uncritical in regard to Socrates (Socrates loves Alcibiades and Alcibiades is a bit too old and he says so!) He is eager to listen to speeches. But otherwise, nondescript. This is, in a way the typical reader of the Gorgias. At any rate, the beginning of the Protagoras, in contradistinction to the Gorgias, shows us Socrates in deep peace with the world, as you have seen, no difficulties. The Gorgias begins with the words:

nothing of this kind here. In other words, sound asleep. That is the translation of what we are going to read now.

The conversation with Hippocrates which begins now and goes to 314c leads to the result that Hippocrates accompanies Socrates to Protagoras, just as accompanies Socrates to Gorgias. More precisely, whereas Socrates goes to Gorgias spontaneously, he is eager to talk to him, he goes to Protagoras for the sake of Hippocrates, compelled by Hippocrates. One can tentatively say: the Protagoras is devoted to the higher theme, sophistry but there Socrates goes with the lower companion. is a mature man, an old friend of Socrates. And the Gorgias has a lower theme but the companion is higher. Whether this means anything or is completely true, we must see, come to see. Now let us read the beginning.

Student: "Last night, or rather very early this morning,..."

Yes, let us stop here. Now, very early in the morning something happened and we are told everything, what happened from this moment on, until now when he tells the story to the comrades. What has Socrates done from the early morning 'til now?

Student: He has been talking.

Talking, talking, talking! And this incidentally, to come back to the symbolism of the sexes, which is the sex sometimes accused of.... Well you know what I am talking about. Now from this point of view, it was much closer to the female sex than the male sex. They, the philosophers, sat at home and talked like women. Men go out into the market-place and war and other manly pursuits. Good. Now begin again.

Student: "Last night, or rather, very early this morning, Hippocrates, the son of ~~Capito~~ and the brother of ~~Hippoc~~ gave a tremendous thump with his staff at my door. Someone opened to him and he came rushing in and called out 'Socrates! Are you awake or asleep?!'"

Let us stop there. Now you see Hippocrates is obviously eager. Socrates is awakened by the noise made by Hippocrates but he did not hear who opened the door. It is really easy to enter Socrates' home, as you see. It is much more difficult to enter the place of Protagoras as we shall see later. There is a reference to the father and the brother of Hippocrates, which means it is hard to identify him. Maybe there was another Hippocrates son of ~~Capito~~ and he had to be distinguished by the brother. So he is not a man as well known, young man as well known as Alcibiades for example. This much seems to be clear. Let us read.

Student: "I recognized his voice", he said.

He recognized his voice. Why is this important? Well, obviously, its dark. Yes.

Student: "Hippocrates, is that you? No bad news I hope?"

"Good news!" he said. "Nothing but good."

"Delightful," I said. "But what is the news and why have you come here at this unearthly hour?"

He drew nearer to me and said:

"Protagoras has arrived," he said.

"Yes," I replied, "he came two days ago. Have you only just heard of his arrival?"

"Yes, by the gods" he said "but not until yesterday evening."

Now let us stop here. Now he has strongly emphasized throughout here that it is dark, so early did he come. And so his reaction when hears his voice; some earthquake? No! Protagoras has come to Athens. Hippocrates had heard earlier of it than the comrade, as you see. The comrade has heard of it from Socrates. And so we conclude that Hippocrates is on a higher level of quote intellectualism than the comrade. Socrates is very sober, as he always is, The fact that you have good news is no reason why you should disturb my sleep; implying in the case of bad news,

if you would need my help, it would of course be reasonable. Hippocrates, as you see, has a habit of command. It was quite a feat for him not to have come already last night, immediately after he heard it. He explains in the sequel why he did not come in the evening; only at four o'clock in the morning, not at seven. Now, go on and read.

* * * * *

Student: "This is my runaway slave, ~~Sotrag~~^{Sotrag}, as I meant to tell you if some other matter had not come in the way. On my return when asked ~~how suffer~~^{how} when we were about to, ~~rest~~^{rest} my brother said to me, "Protagoras has arrived." I was going to you at once and then I thought that the night was far spent. But the moment sleep left me after my fatigue, I got up and came straight here."

Yes, well we know why he was so delicate. He explains or one could almost say he apologizes for having come in or rather for not having come straight away in the evening. He also explains why he did not hear the news of Protagoras earlier. He was busy pursuing a runaway slave. He forgets to say whether he brought him back. That is anybody's guess. I would bet that he brought him back. He takes it for granted that Socrates is eagerly concerned with all his movements, "I forgot to tell you that my slave was runaway," As if Socrates was particularly eager to know. In other words he is quite egocentric.

, there are more than one, may be the place of that name near the border which is about fifty miles away from Athens. He might have heard of Protagoras' at once but for his going after the fugitive slave. These two things seem to be incompatible somehow; the intellectual pursuit and the pursuit of slave. He came back hungry and only after the meal did the brother tell him; because, as you can see, this young fellow with his animal spirits is hungry, no intellect. First a solid meal. Perhaps also his brother was not so excited about Protagoras as Hippocrates is, mentioning the many other news about town after they had talked about the runaway slave. Yes?

Student: "I, who knew the eagerness and excitement of the man said..."

Yes, now. "I knowing his manliness." Manliness.

And It is not mere excitedness. It has a tougher meaning, terrify. And he has shown this clearly by his running after the runaway slave, you know. This was not a gentle master. Now begin again with that sentence.

Student: "I, who knew the courage and vehemence of the man, said, 'What is that to you? Hath Protagoras robbed you of something?'"

Yes. Literally, "Does Protagoras by any means wrong you." Manly individual like Polus is likely to be excited if someone wronged him. Now if he is excited about the arrival of Protagoras, it is likely that Protagoras has wronged him just as his slave has wronged him. It's perfectly natural. Yes.

Student: "He replied, 'Yes indeed he has Socrates of the wisdom which he keeps from me.'"

Yes, he says "by the god" and that is the second time he uses this very comprehensive sermon, 'by the gods.' And he says this laughingly. Now laughing is something which Socrates never does, or hardly ever. But which is also in the Republic, for example, Adimantos never laughs. Glaucon often laughs. Old Cephalos laughs. One can make a collection that is worthwhile. And one can say that it generally is a sign of animal spirits. Now smiling is something different. And these animal spirits Hippocrates obviously has. He does not for one moment consider that Socrates might be wise or make other people wise. That's clear. That appears from his very question. The only man to make me wise is Protagoras, which implies he doesn't expect anything of this nature from Socrates. Yes.

Student: Surely I said..."

No, no. "By Zeus." They should translate this more literally.

Student: "By Zeus, I said, if you give him money and talk him into it, he will make you wise too."

The difficulties, Socrates says to him, can be overcome if you pay money to Protagoras. Of course, you must also persuade him. It seems to imply that Protagoras doesn't take on everybody who brings him money. He is somewhat

selective. Here occurs Socrates' first oath, which is much less comprehensive than the oath used by Hippocrates. He swears only by Zeus. And in the sequel you will see Hippocrates also swears only by Zeus. So in a way he is influenced by Socrates. Yes. The oaths in the Hippocrates section, which is a very short section, are very more numerous than all the oaths in the rest of the dialogue, which I give you as a brute fact empirically. And we must see whether we can draw any conclusion from that fact. I believe we can but we must make some progress first. Yes.

Student: "By Zeus, he replied. That it depended on that! He might take all that I have and all that my friends have if he pleases!"

I have made a mistake on the oath. He says now, "Oh Zeus and the gods." After Socrates has emphasized Zeus, he makes now a distinction between Zeus and the other gods. Go on.

Student: "But that is why I have come to you now, in order that you may speak to him on my behalf; for I am young and also I have not seen nor heard him when he visited Athens before I was but a child. And old men praise him, Socrates. He is reputed to be the most accomplished of speakers. There is no reason why we should not go to him at once so that we shall find him at home. He lunches, as I hear, with the son of ."

So Hippocrates here says it is not a matter of money. Protagoras must also be persuaded, obviously because he knows Protagoras does not accept everyone. And Hippocrates takes it for granted, hopes, that Socrates not Hippocrates, can persuade Protagoras to take Hippocrates on as a pupil. That is the function of Socrates in his eyes.

The wisdom which Hippocrates admires, the wisdom of "speaking." Yes? Protagoras is very clever speaking. From his point of view, from Hippocrates' point of view, there is no difference between rhetoric and sophistry. As we have seen from the Gorgias, where the remark is made that they are identical, or at least very close to each other.

Now, the so-called historical Hippocrates. I mean as distinct from the character in this play. He was the one who made the claim that he can make the weakest speech the stronger. The phrase stems from Protagoras. Which is, of course, part of rhetoric.

One thing we have already seen from this beginning; Socrates talksto Protagoras on behalf of Hippocrates. This

let us keep in mind. And let us now read the sequel.

Student: "I replied: Not yet, my good friend; the hour is too early. But let us rise and take a turn in the court and wait about there until daybreak then we will go. For Protagoras is usually at home, and we shall be sure to find him; never fear."

Protagoras stays most of the time inside so that they will catch him quite naturally inside, indoors. Socrates does not prevent Hippocrates from seeing Protagoras. But he teaches him somewhat better manners. It's too early! Socrates knows Protagoras' habits; which means he knows Protagoras. At the beginning he says, "let us not yet go there." Thither. Which is very commonly used in the sense of opposition to hither, meaning "in this life," uh, in that life. To ha. des. We will see later on when this is given a reasonable explanation, of this fact. And you see the emphasis on indoors. Protagoras is not the outdoor type. To which Hippocrates would rather belong. Protagoras is more one of these womanish men who sit indoors and talk all day. Socrates says yes I will introduce you to Protagoras but not now. It's too early. And then he uses the time which he gains this way for warning Hippocrates of the danger to which he exposes himself by becoming a pupil of Protagoras. And now let us read that.

Student: "Upon this we got up and walked about in the court, and I thought that I would test the strength of his resolution. So I examined him and put questions to him."

Now let us stop here. This is a little thing which we must keep in mind. Socrates tells us in the sequel the questions which he put to him and the answers Hippocrates gave him. But if this were now a performed or a dramatic dialogue, how would this look? Socrates' question, Hippocrates' answer. What would you not hear?

Student: Socrates' intention.

Exactly. Why he phrases this question. That is he wanted to test the strength of Hippocrates. This is the great virtue of the narrated dialogue. In a narrated dialogue you can say things which cannot be said in a performed dialogue. Socrates tells us what he could not have said to the interlocutor. And that point is the great virtue of the narrated dialogue. Now what does he ask him?

Student: "So I examined him and put questions to him. Tell me, Hippocrates, I said, as you are going to Protagoras, and will be paying your money to him, what is he to whom you are going? and what will he make of you? If, for example, you had thought of going to Hippocrates of Cos, the Asclepiad, and were about to give him your money, and some one had said to you: You are paying money to your namesake Hippocrates, O Hippocrates; tell me what is he that you give him your money? how would you have answered?

I should say, he replied, that I gave money to him as a physician.

And what will he make of you?

A physician, he said.

And if you were resolved to go to Polycleitus the Argive, or Pheidias the Athenian, and were intending to give them money, and some one had asked you: What are Polycleitus and Pheidias? and why do you give them this money?--how would you have answered?

I should have answered, that they were sculptors.

And what will they make of you?

A sculptor, of course."

Now let us stop here. We have an interesting parallel to this story in the Gorgias 47d, where Socrates says or rather where it is said to Socrates: "What should I ask? Socrates says "What he is?" "How do you mean?" Socrates, "Well if he happened to be a maker of shoes, he would of course reply that he is a shoemaker, or do you not understand what I mean?" "I understand, and I will ask him." In other words, in the case of the Gorgias, only one line is necessary to explain what he does. Here it is a case of with Hippocrates a very long explanation.

Now this is, I believe, the first case we have in this dialogue of a dialogue within the dialogue. You know that Socrates causes the illusion that someone else asks Hippocrates if someone would ask you, and what would you reply to him? So you see that Socrates not only does not tell Hippocrates that he testing him. He also has the additional courtesy not to ask him questions. A third individual, non-existent, created for the purpose of Socrates, asks the questions. This is clear? Now if he is embarrassed by the questions, he will not be embarrassed by Socrates, but by this invisible, non-existent person. Is this point clear? That is the great advantage which this has. Good.

being treated than it is becoming like Socrates.

I see. You would link it up with this point that it was not even imagined that he could be helped by Socrates.

Student: Well that he doesn't imagine that what he needs well, what he needs is to go to some wise person to be treated, rather than be taught.

Yes. Well this is maybe what the previous student meant.

Student: I notice that the town of Protagoras is not mentioned. Is it because the other towns have a reputation or are famous?

Well, it is not certain that the town had a reputation as of yet. Later on it was known as the hometown of Democritus. Yes?

Student: Does the name Protagoras have a Greek meaning?

Yes. But I can't tell you that! It comes out very simply and it comes out much more beautifully when we come to his speech later on. I think that jokes must only be told at the proper place.

Student: The fact that Socrates had to be asked the name of Protagoras' town points out the difference between the origins of these artisans and that of Protagoras. Theirs was given voluntarily.

No. This was different. They knew, of course, Protagoras. That was in the first conversation with the comrade. And Socrates says first he comes from Abdera and then he mentions Protagoras. If he had first mentioned Protagoras, it would not have been necessary to mention that he comes from Abdera.

Student: But he has to be asked where he comes from?

When he says, "this beautiful being comes from Abdera." They do not for one moment think that it is old Protagoras. Because they do not connect beauty and wisdom.

Student: From the section where Socrates says that he is going to test Hippocrates, test his strength or firmness, doesn't that apply bodily strength?

Yes, primarily that would be strength, just as the English. But here at this point, in this connection, it

obviously means the firmness of purpose; would he truly insist on going to see Protagoras after he has been treated by Socrates? That is the point. Good. Now let us see where we can go here.

So Socrates prepares the thesis of these examples. But the physician and the sculptor are only examples, bringing out the difference between these respectable arts and the art of sophistry. That comes out in the sequel.

Student: "Well, now, I said, you and I are going to Protagoras, and we are ready to pay him money as a fee on your behalf. If our own means are sufficient, and we can gain him with these, we shall be only too glad; but if not, then we are to spend the money of our friends as well."

In other words, this is the first warning. Hitherto it was perfectly clear that these examples were uninteresting fundamentally because Hippocrates doesn't dream of becoming a physician or of becoming a sculptor. But here now it becomes serious. We go now there to pay money! And not perhaps only a little bit but perhaps we ruin ourselves and our friends as well. So it must be truly worthwhile.

Student: The persuasion is with the money?

Yes well in Greek the word bribing is called persuading with money, which is a perfectly intelligent...

Student: "Now suppose that while we are thus enthusiastically pursuing our object some one were to say to us: Tell me, Socrates, and you Hippocrates, what is Protagoras, and why are you going to pay him money?--how should we answer? I know that Pheidias is a sculptor, and that Homer is a poet; but what appellation is given to Protagoras? how is he designated?

They call him a Sophist, Socrates, he replied.

Then we are going to pay our money to him in the character of a Sophist?

Certainly."

You see now that Socrates and Hippocrates go now together and pay together. That's clear. And they are asked questions together. But this is all for Hippocrates' sake. There is this great difference between the two, although they do everything else together. To study with Protagoras is very expensive, obviously. And the seriousness

of purpose is measured by the amount of money they are willing to invest. I think this has not changed since. He drops now the physician we have seen and adds a poet, "the" poet. Which is already now an indication that Protagoras' art is somehow not like that of the physician; but an imitative art as these other arts mentioned were.

Student: Is there any other name given by Socrates to Protagoras like the "wise" man or the "teacher?"

Yes, but he certainly knew quite well what in these circles Protagoras would be called. What the sophist is is another matter. You know, take the present day term "intellectual." What is an intellectual? I will take this up by the text. Let us only stop here for the time being. Now I think we should read a little bit on.

First he asks him how would you call him as you would know the answer in the case of the physician and the sculptor, sophist. Now if someone would now ask you, you Hippocrates, no longer Socrates, in addition. Yes?

Student: "But suppose a person were to ask this further question: And how about yourself? What will Protagoras make of you, if you go to see him?

He answered, with a blush upon his face (for the day was just beginning to dawn, so that I could see him): Unless this differs in some way from the former instances, I suppose that he will make a Sophist of me."

So the difference between the question regarding the Sophist and the questions regarding the physician and the sculptor. The second half of the question, namely what will become of you? is to be answered by Hippocrates alone. He no longer has the support...they go together, they pay together, but here he is alone. And here he begins to see the difficulty. He blushes. He would be ashamed to become a Sophist. Like he would be delighted to learn the art of teaching, but he would be ashamed to be a Sophist. Whether Socrates would be ashamed or not we cannot draw any conclusions because of the tremendous ambiguity of the word Sophist.

Student: "By the gods, I said, and are you not..."

Now here Socrates begins with the swearing.

Student: "...are you not ashamed at having to appear before the Hellenes in the character of a Sophist?

Indeed Socrates, to confess the truth, I am."

Yes, he swears by Zeus. By Zeus, if I should tell what I think. Socrates swears now first and of course Hippocrates

responds. He now reminds Hippocrates of the gods. So there is some dubious relation between the Sophist and the gods. Hippocrates was known to have said the brevity of his life prevented him from finding out about the difficulty of the gods. And he was also driven out, expelled from Athens because of his alleged impiety. Socrates suggests to Hippocrates that it is improper to be a Sophist. The suggestion falls on very fertile soil, of course. Now let us read the sequel.

Student: "But you should not assume, Hippocrates, that the instruction of Protagoras is of this nature: may you not learn of him in the same way that you learned the arts of the grammarian, or musician, or trainer, not with the view of making any of them a profession, but only as part of education, and because a private gentleman and freeman ought to know them?"

Just so, he said; and that, in my opinion, is a far truer account of the teaching of Protagoras."

Now let us stop here. This is what Hippocrates says, this last sentence. Now the context is this: the Sophist is a low class man, this is implied in Hippocrates' blushing. Now we have to consider that for one moment because in itself that is just a social prejudice. At that time actors were regarded as the absolute scum of society and today they occupy the highest places. And so these are prejudices dependent on time and place. And we cannot take it too seriously and Socrates cannot take it too seriously. Why are they so distrusted or disliked? Well, they are people who teach high things for money. That was the first reason. They are prostitutes. But if we are honest, they do not do anything worse than professors do. In the famous history of Greece, there is the strong point that the terrible things said against the Sophists in Plato are really unfair. And the worst things which they are doing is the same as an M.P. And who could be higher or more respectable in the eyes of George than an M.P.

Now let us look a bit more closely. Socrates does not teach for money. That is a difference. But, as he says in the Apology, he lives in ten thousandfold poverty. We would probably say today in a millionaires poverty. He has no visible means of support. But what is the economic basis of his life after all he must eat and drink and he has children and a wife. Now this subject is discussed with the necessary delicacy in a dialogue properly entitled Economicus. I read to you only a short portion from this dialogue. Well, what is property, what is wealth? that is the question. Now wealth is the totality of useful things a man has. For example, wealth is that from which a man can derive profit or benefit. At any rate if a man uses his money to buy a mistress, who makes him worse of in body and soul, how can his money be profitable to him? Obviously. Unless we are to maintain that the weed called which

drives you mad when you eat it, is wealth which you also can possess. Then money is to be kept in existence if one does not know how to use it, and not to be included in wealth. But how about friends? If one knows how to use them so as to profit by them? What are they to be called? Money, by Zeus!" So, that is quite enough. Now this is very important for Socrates. In the Apology of Socrates, everyone remember that Socrates offered to pay a fine for his alleged crimes. But he ain't got no money! Who will give the money? His friends. We see similar scenes in the first book of the Republic where Thrasymachus asks for money. So he says, I haven't got the money. Who will pay the money? And again, the friends.

Why should it be more decent to be supported by one's friends than by one's students? Of course, one could say, what kind of friends? the kind would obviously be the difference. I make this simple inference: Socrates rejection of the Sophist cannot be identical to the popular rejection of the Sophist. He must have a somewhat different reason. Now what is the difference between the philosopher and the Sophist? from Socrates point of view. And I think we can say very simply this: the Sophist is a kind of charlatan, prompted by base ambition, very clever, a master of , who does what he does because he decides to make a splash. Democratus, the famous Atomist, very different in his thought than that of Socrates and Plato, said of himself he came to Athens and no one knew him. No one took any notice of him. And it didn't disturb him particularly. He was not a Sophist. The philosophers are not charlatans. I would say that is an important point to make. And there is a very beautiful illustration of that in that work which comes closer to presenting a philosopher as charlatan than any other I know of and that is Descartes! Discourse on Method, which is a very inspiring and beautiful piece of writing. But one of its many charms consists of Descartes presenting himself as a man brings all benefit, you know like a sophisticated crier at a fair. I can make you immortal with my...and all kinds of other things. But it is obviously ironical because Descartes proves in a way that he is not a charlatan by presenting himself as a charlatan.

Yes. I suppose that one could say, in general, philosophers are not charlatans. And there are perhaps some borderline cases. One is a very famous contemporary case which we are not sufficiently familiar with so as to use as an example. Maybe later on with a provocation I will give it.

But to come back for one second to the text; Socrates has debunked the Sophist. No decent man would seek to become a Sophist. He has not debunked, of course, sophistry. On the contrary! For example, would a boy from a good family wish to become a sport teacher? a gymnastic teacher? a teacher of reading and writing? Of course not. And yet it was perfectly proper for him to go to school with these people. Why should he not go to school with the Sophists just as he went to school with the gymnastic teacher and the teacher of reading, writing, and

arithmetic. And never dreaming, of course, that he would exercise later on such professions. Contrary to President Johnson who does not blush at having been a simple teacher.

The profession, say, of teaching these simple things may not become become a private and free man. The two words are almost identical here. A man who leads a retired life, and who is a freeman. But the teaching of it may be worthy. So hitherto no difficulty here. Only Socrates reminded him of the fact that while he admires Protagoras he would never wish to be such a man, just as in the last century, a well-bred girl may admire an actress or two centuries ago might admire an actress, and of course never wish to become an actress. That is, I believe, the nearest example I can think of now. This is clear. And now Socrates raises the question is it as objectionable, or rather as unobjectionable or simple to go to school with a Sophist as it is to go to school with a teacher of the three arts? The answer is no. But we must now conclude.

Plato's Protagoras: A course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science, University of Chicago,
Spring 1965.

Lecture 5 April 12, 1965:

A reminder of the context: Now we came up to 312 and we will go on after this brief reminder.

Now I remind you of a few points. First, the dialogue consists of three parts. The first, the dialogue with the comrade, which is a report to the comrade of his conversation with Protagoras, and on what led up to that conversation. Secondly, the conversation with Hippocrates, which is the only strictly private part of the Protagoras, leading up to what is the conversation with Protagoras.

Socrates goes to Protagoras not only in company of Hippocrates, but also on Hippocrates' behalf. And we are in this section. Socrates had shown to Hippocrates that becoming a pupil of Protagoras differs from his becoming a pupil of a physician or a sculptor because Hippocrates will not become a pupil of Protagoras in order for himself to become a Sophist. He will go to Protagoras rather in the way in which he went to the teacher in reading and writing and so on, namely for the sake of education and not for the sake of acquiring an art which he would exercise and which would be the source of his revenue. At this point we continue at 312b7.

Student: "I said: I wonder whether you know what you are doing?

And what am I doing?

You are going to commit your soul to the care of a man whom you call a Sophist. And yet I hardly think that you know what a Sophist is; and if not, then you do not even know to whom you are committing your soul and whether the thing to which you commit yourself be good or evil.

I certainly think that I do know, he replied."

"I do believe to know." That is a bit weaker.

Student: "Then tell me what do you believe a Sophist to be."

Socrates draws his attention here to the risk in handing over one's soul to a Sophist. This is a new consideration. In other words, there is a much greater risk than to hand over I-don't-know-what to one's teacher in reading and writing or in sitar playing. The fact that Hippocrates wishes to go to Protagoras for the sake of education as distinguished from a profession or instruction makes his wish not less dangerous than if he were to go to become a Sophist. Hippocrates is, of course, sure that he knows what a Sophist is. Now let us see whether he does know.

Student: "Then tell me, what do you imagine that he is?

I take him to be one who knows wise things, he replied, as his name implies.

And might you not, I said affirm this of the painter and of the carpenter also: Do not they, too, know wise things? But suppose a person were to ask us: In what are

the painters wise? We should answer: In what relates to the making of likenesses, and similarly of other things. And if he were further to ask: What is the wisdom of the Sophist, and what is the manufacture over which he presides?--how should we answer him?"

Now let us stop here. Now we see again a dialogue within the dialogue. Socrates and Hippocrates are both asked the question and both are supposed to answer it. Now the two arts which are used as examples, painting and housebuilding, painting is defined as the making of images and the making of images is, of course, very important for rhetoric. Building, however, is not defined. But one knows. Builders build houses. Houses refer to the polis, the city consisting of houses and to the political art. So the relation of the rhetorical and political art is yet somehow implied. Now let us go on.

Student: "How..."

But we understand the situation. The answer which Hippocrates has given is much too general. The Sophist is a man and knower of wise things. And this is naturally too general because there are many kinds of wise things.

Student: "How should we answer him, Socrates? What other answer could there be but, that he presides over the art which makes men eloquent?"

Yes, I replied, that is very likely true, but not enough; for in the answer a further question is involved: Of what does the Sophist make a man talk eloquently?

The player on the lyre may be supposed to make a man talk eloquently about that which he makes him understand, that is about playing the lyre. Is not that true?

Yes.

Then about what does the Sophist make him eloquent?

Must not he make him eloquent in that which he understands?

Yes, that may be assumed.

And what is that which the Sophist knows and makes his disciples know?

Indeed, he said, I cannot tell."

"By Zeus, I cannot tell." Here we see he understands a Sophist to be a man who teaches you to become a good speaker i.e. he identifies Sophistry and rhetoric, which is, in a way possible, as we have seen in the Gorgias. The situation here is exactly like that in the Gorgias. The question is clever in speaking about what? How can he make you clever in speaking about medicine if he doesn't teach you medicine? And is it possible at all to make a man clever in speaking without making him clever in the knowledge of a specific subject matter? Only he is much briefer because it was much easier to silence Hippocrates

than Gorgias or Polus. Hippocrates doesn't know what Sophistry is. That's very clear. And yet he longs for it. At the same time he rejects it. He would never wish to become a Sophist. Now the example is a sitar player or a player on the lyre. What does such a teacher teach? He teaches of course by means of words. But an art which produces not speeches, but wordless sounds as we can also say, meaningful silence. If it is not articulate language one can call it silence. Then here he says "What shall we say Socrates? except that he knows how to make one clever in speaking." This is not always possible to say. Why does he say here O Socrates and not there? It is necessary to give some thought to it. The extreme case which make this more clear are from our own experience. When we talk we do not all the time address the interlocutor by his name. That has a special reason or emphasis. Now the extreme cases are these. If he says something outrageous and you want to bring him back to his senses, you say, "But look Mr. Miller." Yes? Or the opposite cases which happens especially to men like Socrates the interlocutor says that in order to kind of cry for help. "Stop, stop!" Here, it looks rather more like a call for help or an expression of uncertainty than the opposite. But this would need some more consideration. Now let us go on.

So he doesn't know what Sophistry is; he wants yet to hand over his soul to a Sophist, which is a risky thing. Yes?

Student: "Then I proceeded to say: Well, but are you aware of the danger which you are incurring? If you were going to commit your body to some one, who might do good or harm to it, would you not carefully consider and ask the opinion of your friends and kindred, and deliberate many days as to whether you should give him the care of your body? But when the soul is in question, which you hold to be of far more value than the body, and upon the good or evil of which depends the well-being of your all,--about this you never consulted either with your father or with your brother or with any one of us who are your companions. But no sooner does this foreigner appear, than you instantly commit your soul to his keeping. In the evening, as you say, you hear of him, and in the morning you go to him, never deliberating or taking the opinion of any one as to whether you ought to entrust yourself to him or not;--you have quite made up your mind that you will at all hazards be a pupil of Protagoras, and are prepared to expend all the property of yourself and of your friends in carrying out at any price this determination, although, as you admit, you do not know him, and have never spoken with him; and you call him a Sophist, but are manifestly ignorant of what a Sophist is; and yet you are going to commit yourself to his keeping."

Now that is a strong statement. He shows now that Hippocrates' notion is extremely rash and long deliberation would be needed

as to whether it would be wise to become a pupil of Protagoras or, for that matter, of a Sophist in general. Now this deliberation does not take place in Socrates conversation with Hippocrates. And the question arises when or whether it will take place at all. You see here when he spoke about the difference between body and soul; he spoke first about the case of the body. You would deliberate with your friends and kinsmen. And then in the repetition a few lines later he says father and brother. Kinsmen. And we comrades of yours, he does not use the word friends here. Now in the case of the body, the friends may be more competent than the father and the brother. Obviously. The comrades may have medical education and the father and brother may lack it. And this is in no way a disqualification of father and brother.

In the case of the soul, however, father and brother are more competent than the comrades. Are they? One thing is certainly clear. Father and brother will be more concerned with his well-being than the comrades. Now this greater concern would be decisive if there were no art called medicine of the soul. But if there is an art "medicine of the soul," which the comrades have and father and brother have not, you would of course listen more to the comrades than to father and brother. But that is entirely an open question.

You will see here how Socrates appeals to the prejudice of Hippocrates. "That stranger!" That of course has a plausible meaning, you know him less than you would know a fellow citizen in a relatively small city.

Student: "When he heard me say this, he replied: No other inference, Socrates, can be drawn from your words."

What does this mean? You see, literally, "And he having heard, said..." Now this, I believe, never occurred before. There were two categorizations of his replies before. In the first place 310b4, where he said, "having laughed" and in 312a2 "having blushed." First laughing, and then blushing, and now listening. Now it is clear that listening is a more serious reaction than or intellectual reaction than laughing or blushing. The sequence is, we can say, perfectly logical. First he is self-assured and he laughs. Then he blushes. And now between the two extremes he listens.

In this part of the Hippocrates section which we began today, towards the end, there are no longer any oaths. Now, generally speaking, I could not prove that. Now I am speaking from recollection. The oaths increased in such works as Plato's Republic with the bantering character of the conversation. The more serious, the less oaths.

Student: "I proceeded: Is not a Sophist, Hippocrates, one who deals wholesale or retail in the food of the soul? To me that appears to be his nature.
And what, Socrates, is the food of the soul?
Surely, I said, knowledge is the food of the soul:..."

Literally, "Pieces of learning." You can perhaps say

doctrines. Dogmas would be misleading.

Student: Is this another step in that progression? You know, where first he compares a Sophist to a person you would go to become like him and to someone who you would go to be educated but not to become one of that kind.

Yes, sure. But there is the question how can you call a Sophist a retail or wholesale merchant? That we must see. Now let us finish this section.

Student: "Surely, I said, pieces of learning are the food of the soul; and we must take care, my friend, that the Sophist does not deceive us when he praises what he sells, like the dealers wholesale or retail who sell the food of the body; for they praise indiscriminately all their goods, without knowing what are really beneficial or hurtful; neither do their customers know, with the exception of any trainer or physician who may happen to buy of them. In like manner those who carry about the wares of knowledge, and make the round of the cities, and sell or retail them to any customer who is in want of them, praise them all alike; though I should not wonder, O my friend, if many of them were really ignorant of their effect upon the soul; and their customers equally ignorant, unless he who buys of them happens to be a physician of the soul."

Socrates states now what a Sophist is. Hitherto it was held somewhat dangerous to become a pupil of the Sophist since we do not know what a Sophist is. Now it is dangerous to become a pupil of the Sophist since we do know what a Sophist is, at least to some extent. At any rate, Socrates knows.

The Sophists are sellers of soul food. And therefore are as incompetent judges of its goodness and as dishonest as the sellers of body food. Now why are they called sellers, retail or wholesale?

Student: Because they charge for the lesson.

Surely. That is one important point. But also? Well, after all, if a farmer brings grain to the market he will also sell, will he not?

Student: They did not make up all their ideas.

Yes. They did not produce the doctrines which they sell. They sell the wares produced by other people. And that is a very severe charge against the Sophist. They are not "original." They get their stuff from other people. Otherwise whether the comparison is right or wrong, that is very clear.

Hitherto Socrates has only stated what Sophists have in common with the sellers of body food. And therefore the situation

is as grave in both cases. We know that people at all times don't ~~have~~ have a sufficient trust in their experience in the kind of honesty in the body food sellers. Now Socrates says that to buy body food is infinitely less dangerous than to buy soul food. This he will explain in the sequel.

Student: "If , therefore..."

Wait. I want to make a point here which I forgot. If he does not happen to be a physician of the soul. Here he mentions only the physician not the trainer, as you see. And generally speaking gymnastics of the soul is not a very common term. Medicine of the soul has become a very common term throughout the ages. Now, why this emphasis on the restoring of health, rather than the building up of the health of the soul? What does this imply?

Student: Maybe it can't be done. You can't train the soul

Well, isn't it the more obvious explanation that the soul is by nature sick. And therefore what you need is medicine of the soul rather than gymnastics of the soul? This is not entirely far-fetched. In the Republic 341c, Socrates contrasts the goodness of the art of medicine with the badness of the human body. And he also says that the art of medicine is related to the human body as sight is to the eyes. Just as eyes reach their full actuality by the act of sight, the body reaches its full actuality by means of the art of medicine. One could say art is a perfection of an imperfect nature. This is a thought which is rich in indications because at the end of this is that nature is bad and everything depends on man's doing, especially art. So this is only implied. But it is not an accident, I believe, that medicine of the soul and not gymnastics of the soul has become the term for philosophy from a practical point of view throughout the ages.

Student: "If therefore you have understanding of what is good and evil, you may safely buy knowledge of Protagoras or of any one; but if not, then, O my friend, pause, and do not hazard your dearest interests at a game of chance."

Now Socrates reminds Hippocrates delicately of this fact. That Hippocrates is utterly incompetent to judge of the worth of Protagoras' merchandise. This is a sign of Socrates' urbanity. There is only one exception, not in Plato, but in Xenophon. Xenophon reports this himself, that Socrates called him in a given situation, "You fool!" and "You wretch," which he did not in any other case. But of course Socrates in Aristophanes' Clouds is always very harsh and never urbane. This I suggest only in passing.

Student: "For there is far greater peril in buying pieces of learning than in buying meat and drink: the one you purchase of the wholesale or retail dealer, and carry' them away in other vessels, and before you receive them' into the body as food, you may deposit them at home and call in any experienced friend who knows ~~what is~~ good to be eaten or drunken, and what not, and how much, and when; and then the danger of purchasing them is not so great. But you cannot buy the wares of knowledge and carry them away in another vessel; when you have paid for them you must receive them into the soul and go your way, wither greatly harmed or greatly benefited;..."

To buy food of the soul is ~~infinitely~~ more dangerous than to buy food for the body. He mentions paying the price only in the case of the soul food because soul' food in addition to all other difficulties is also more expensive than body food; especially if you think of the simplest things like water and bread.

You see here also a trans'ition at the beginning of the passage from food to food and drink. So this draws our attention to drink in particular. What could be the connection between Protagoras' merchandise and drink?

Student: Well drink can free you of certain inhibitions you have.

Water!?! You mean certain kinds of drink. What is the immediate kind of effect of this drink of which you speak? Intoxication. Now Protagoras intoxicates you. Now that we shall see as a gift of charm to intoxicate people. And I think the emphasis on drinks is implied in the mere use of "vessels." Many types of food you can carry away without using vessels but you cannot take away liquids without vessels. And here the vessel is your own soul! And so the effect on your soul is immediate. Whereas the effect of the body food depends entirely upon when you will eat it and if you eat it. You don't have to inflict it on your body immediately. Go on.

Student: "and therefore we should deliberate and take counsel with our elders; for we are still young--too young to determine such a matter. And now let us go, as we were intending, and hear Protagoras; and when we have heard him speak, we may take counsel of others; for not only is Protagoras at the house of Callias, but there is Hippias of Elis, and, if I am not mistaken, Prodicus of Ceos, and several other wise men."

Now we must deliberate whether it is wise or safe to become Protagoras' pupil. This deliberation does not take place now between Hippocrates and Socrates. The implication being that they are incompetent to make this deliberation. And yet,

here is something very surprising. What do they do? They have not deliberated. And what do they do? They go just the same. And what does that mean? I mean in the following remark of Socrates. Well, they do not deliberate. And Socrates has warned them of the terrific danger. In other words, despite the danger Socrates exposes Hippocrates to the soul food or soul drink of Protagoras. Obviously, because they cannot know whether Protagoras will say, "Today there will be no food and we will just discuss ..." Socrates, after all, could simply have refused to introduce Hippocrates to Protagoras and say, "that is too dangerous for you my boy and I will not be responsible for you being corrupted by that stranger-Sophist." Why does Socrates not do this? Why does he expose him to Protagoras? So Socrates can debunk Protagoras is one answer. And that is a possible answer but that means, of course, that Socrates has great self-confidence, and has taken a measure of Protagoras and can do it.

Student: I wanted to ask why is it that Socrates says that "we" are not competent to judge?

Yes, sure. He is too young and not competent. They must both deliberate with people wiser than they.

Student: Are other people wiser than Socrates?

Well. This is always a question. But we have to take that literally: they will have to deliberate with other people. Now, here, with whom can they possibly deliberate? because immediately after he said this he says, "and then after having heard we will also communicate with others." For not only is Protagoras there but also Hippias and Prodicus. Does this not suggest that they will deliberate with two other Sophists? because there is some deliberation with them that takes place. But that we, of course, do not know. The deliberation about the wisdom of becoming Protagoras' pupil will take place, perhaps within the dialogue itself. Or the part about the debunking would also be a part of the deliberation.

When he speaks here of the two other Sophists, he mentions Hippias first and then the case of Prodicus, he adds, I believe also Prodicus. In other words, this is weakened. He is not so sure in the case of Prodicus. Prodicus happened to be the Sophist closest to Socrates. That we know, for example, from Aristophanes' Clouds. And that is very interesting. We have a Platonic dialogue called Protagoras, as we see; there are two dialogues called Hippias; and there is no dialogue called Prodicus. That is curious. We will take this up later after we have made the acquaintance of these gentlemen.

Now here we are at the end of the Hippocrates section of the dialogue. We have learned here that the whole discussion with Protagoras takes place for the sake of Hippocrates. We can say, in order to prevent the corruption of Hippocrates by Protagoras.

There is a whole discussion with Gorgias, expressed for the sake of Gorgias and not directly to prevent his corruption, he is too old for that. But still, another way to improve him.

The theme of the Protagoras seems to be higher than that of the Gorgias, if Sophistry is indeed higher than rhetoric. But the level of treatment is lower in the Protagoras than in the Gorgias. Now the character for the sake of whom the conversation with Protagoras takes place is, of course, different from the characters to whom the conversation is narrated.

What I said was extremely simple but I expressed it clumsily. There is a character or characters to whom the conversation with Protagoras is narrated, the comrade at the beginning. And then there is a character for the sake of whom the conversation with Protagoras takes place. And let us look at this character now for the sake of whom the conversation takes place. He is quite young. He is manly, virile; swears frequently. He is more tinged by "intellectualism," than the comrade. He knows much earlier of the arrival of such a star as Protagoras. And he is very egotistical; we have seen how he behaved toward Socrates in the bedroom. While eager for things new and strange, he is under the spell of the old prejudices--never would he become a Sophist.

Socrates does not try to cure him as he tried to cure the comrade by an appeal to Homer or other traditional authorities. Now this brief conversation with Hippocrates is, as I said before, the central conversation within the dialogue. It is the only conversation which takes place in strict privacy. One man talking to one man. It is the only dialogue which exists which takes place in the privacy of Socrates' house, not to say, of his bedroom. Some of you will remember another bedroom scene of which we learned in the Platonic dialogues. Well, it was Alcibiades report of his sleeping with Socrates at the end of the Banquet. Now the Crito is very important. But it is a different, special kind of a bedroom; the jail. And as was pointed out to me after the last meeting by some of you, the situation is very different in the Crito. Crito enters Socrates' bedroom in the very early morning without awakening him. And you know that the short time Socrates has to live. And he should not be exposed to the agony of death and so should sleep. Whereas Hippocrates awakens him because he comes with good news. Yes. We can leave it at that.

This much I wanted to say about this central conversation although in external terms it is rather ex-centric, rather close to the beginning. Is there any point which you would like to raise? in connection with what we have discussed now? Because now we turn to the bulk of the dialogue.

Student: How would anyone learn what the doctrines of a Sophist were without exposing yourself to the danger of learning them from the Sophist?

That is a good question! But still you can go by perhaps

very crude criteria. For example if you know that it is improper to study things in hell or beneath the earth and then you find out that this Sophist does study things beneath the earth... Well this is clear, no? Or if he would say there is nothing just by nature, all just is convention. Could you not just on this basis, say I don't want anything to do with him. And at least I don't want my immature children to have anything to do with him?

How do people go about in choosing teachers for their children? I mean there are some cases which have come to the public record. There was a professor, I forget where it was, in Indiana or in Illinois who gave uncalled for advice to "co-eds". Well, you know. Now I suppose quite a few parents would say, on the basis of this mere fact that he is not a good teacher of girls. I mean I don't see a great difference. You ask a broad question and so I must give you a very general answer. Or would you wish to make your question more specific?

Student: Socrates initially expresses the danger of going to a Sophist in terms of not knowing anything of the doctrines of the Sophist. This is not the same thing as knowing perhaps at least one doctrine of a professor, which may or may not disqualify him.

Yes, all right. But how would you behave as a father in such a case where you do not know if the merchandise is healthy or unhealthy? for your child? What would you do?

Student: Well I'd be inclined to go see myself.

In other words, you would not do as Socrates does. That is to expose his soul to that unhealthy, maybe fatal merchandise.

Student: Well. Personally I am skeptical that doctrines in themselves, ~~or~~ ~~otherwise~~ ~~these~~ ~~can~~ ~~do~~ damage if there is someone available to refute them. Now I don't see that there is anything unreasonable about Socrates' conduct. But what I do see as unreasonable is Socrates' insistence on the dangers to Hippocrates in going off to Protagoras in the first place.

Yes, well, you see your view is familiar to me. In that no doctrines can be dangerous because, how was it told, the free market, notice market, of ideas and the good cause will be victorious. But can it not do some harm while it is not yet deflated? And secondly how important is the refutation regarding its effect? There are many refuted doctrines who are still very active. I mean quite a few people have refuted Marxism in its original models and forms but you must admit that this is much less efficient than the armament of this country. Doctrine by virtue of being refuted ceases to be powerful.

Student: I think its a question of who delivers the refutation, and when. If Hippocrates went off to Protagoras and heard a

dangerous doctrine, and supposed he believed it. And then some six months later he chances to hear a refutation from somebody he didn't particularly trust anyway. Then this refutation would have no effect. In this particular case, if Socrates is going along with him he obviously has a considerable trust in Socrates and Socrates would be able to refute it immediately if it were to call for a refutation.

Yes. That is in a way what happens. But the other questions are this: you say he has considerable trust in Socrates, but he does not for one moment think that Socrates could supply him with good soul food. So how great can the trust in Socrates be? He has asked Socrates as a man benevolent to him and a man whose advice he would listen to; but not as a wise man. I mean if Socrates were sensitive to the least degree, he could very well feel offended. He has known him for a long time and does not for one moment consider him a wise man. Whereas he regards Protagoras, that star, of course as a wise man on the basis of his star-like appearance. But I think the question of principle which you raise is that there is no doctrine however wrong which can do harm to the soul is ~~is exactly~~ the problem. That is what divides most of us from Plato and other men. They thought that there are dangerous doctrines. And the now prevailing view is that there are no dangerous doctrines. This is stated simply and honestly. That is exactly the reason that we read such books, in order to look at our fundamental premises from the other side. We may arrive at the conclusion that the now prevailing view is correct but then we will understand our view much better, after having gone through that operation. If we simply continue what we have thought before without testing, well.....

Student: Can you use the analogy of drink here and say that what Protagoras is going to teach is not simply a matter of doctrine or simply a set of doctrines which have a value or truth but a... or will become something in the way of an appetite.

Yes. Still that...well, but let us make a distinction between unimportant doctrines and important doctrines. An unimportant doctrine about the intestines of the worm. This cannot possibly corrupt anybody. But doctrines about good or bad, justice and injustice, do not have this character. And obviously Protagoras is so much in remark because he teaches interesting and important, not unimportant doctrines.

Student: Does the fact that Socrates is willing to lead Hippocrates into this danger raise any question about what we discussed earlier concerning whether this is a voluntary or involuntary discussion? Because if Protagoras was at all difficult of access, then Socrates would come having a bait in a way.

But we do not know enough of that. This would presuppose that Socrates had not seen Protagoras before. And I don't disclose a

secret to you when I tell you that he had seen him before. So this coming to Protagoras in the company of Hippocrates radically differs from other conversations Socrates had with Protagoras where no such bait was needed.

Student: One reason you gave for reading Plato...

Or such books in general!

Student: was to better understand our views much better. Why do we have to read other people's books to understand our opinions better?

Do you know of anyone today who states the other view, the alternatives to the views now prevailing as forcefully as the great men of the past?

Student: Do we have to understand the "other" argument to understand our own?

Well, the question is...I mean there are some people who are doubtful of the soundness of the Dewists, John Dewey. But whether these men have the power of presenting their alternative view with all the inside ramifications that men like Plato have? That is a question that I believe is not a serious question. I have some instincts but I think there is no one there who can be compared with Plato or any other.

Student: But those of them who understand themselves, say Locke.

He needn't have read anything by Plato or Aristotle. Only those who are inferior...

That is not quite true. How does John Locke call his peculiar approach to the fundamental question?

Student: Would you repeat that?

How does John Locke call the approach to the fundamental question? Well he doesn't say it in one of the better known works. I happen to know it: the way of idea. And he traces that to Descartes. Yes. But who began to speak in a very orderly way of idea? So I believe one has to know Plato if one wants to understand what the Cartesian-Lockean way of idea is. And one could say, and others. In Locke himself you see you cannot understand him sufficiently if you do not know say surely and also. So that is merely a question of principle. One has to know the so called quarrel of the ancients and moderns because we are driven back to it again and again.

Student: You mentioned a moment ago in answering one of these other questions concerning what a father does when he is introducing

his son to a new danger. I wonder if there is a possibility here that Socrates regards himself in the realm of ideas as the father of Hippocrates in a certain sense. And like a father introducing a son to a new danger, does it so that it is consonant with the nature of the son. For example, Hippocrates is an impulsive and manly, masculine individual. So Socrates would consider that if he said no this is merely dangerous...

Yes. But your question reminds me of a classic discussion much earlier and that is Milton's Areopagitica. And he takes issue with the cautious posture of the ancient writers. He says fundamentally that we must be exposed to all kinds of evil to be truly good. And he speaks of cloistered virtue as something which is not good; or treats it as something not good. If you read the Areopagitica...I'm sure some of you have read it or will read it because it is one of the very early and famous documents for complete freedom of discussion. It would simply mean that the best way to bring up children is in a street in which the majority of houses are of ill repute. Now Milton of course did not mean that. And I believe no sane man ever meant that. You see there are some limits at least there is a certain stage in which our education must be cloistered. And the question is, how long this takes? Whether eight years is the end or fourteen years or maybe even, as the ancients said, in the case of many men their whole life!

Student: As far as Socrates deciding to go talk to Protagoras, is it possible that Socrates is saying to himself: that what will come out of the discussion will convince Hippocrates that Protagoras has nothing to offer. But in any case what is important to me as a thinking man is not so much to do some moral good for another person as to expose a young man to an intelligent discussion.

Yes, well this is only a repetition of an argument which says that Socrates could have gone to Protagoras any time without Hippocrates.

Student: Yes but perhaps ~~because~~ Hippocrates is there Protagoras is more willing to spend time.

But is Socrates so busy that he could not go there unless he has such a practical reason? We know Socrates is not busy at all. He does nothing but talking.

Student: The point is not whether Socrates is busy but is Hippocrates being used as bait to get Socrates into a discussion.

Yes. But that is a question which we cannot now answer because you must see how things develop. This will have to be the last question

Student: What is the justification, if there is this tension between the pursuit of understanding on the one hand the necessity for studying evil doctrines on the other hand, for the pursuit of wisdom? Perhaps we should just take our chances.

That is not the point. The question is whether someone like the slavehunting Hippocrates, a boy of say sixteen seventeen, is of the nature and has the preparation for the pursuit of wisdom. Now let us go on where we left off.

Student: "To this we agreed, and proceeded on our way until we reached the vestibule of the house; and there we stopped in order to conclude a discussion which had arisen between us as we were going along; and we stood talking in the vestibule until we had finished and come to an understanding."

Yes. Now let us stop here. So there is here a conversation between Socrates and Hippocrates which is not reported. And we draw from this the simple and trivial conclusion that not every conversation is disclosed. They complete that conversation while standing; standing is emphasized. They do no longer walk.

There is a difference between what you do standing and what you do walking. I think you know this from your own experience. You are more concentrated when you stand than when you are walking. You talk to someone and then you don't go on because you need a greater concentration and the movement of the body in walking would be detrimental to the movement of the mind. "Coming to a stand after movement" is acquiring the concept of the thing in question. Read Aristotle's Posterior Analytics in the end.

This conversation comes to an end and the conversation with Protagoras which follows is in a way incomplete. There is also a classic passage about standing in a vestibule in the beginning of Plato's Banquet. And Alcibiades also refers to Socrates standing in silent meditation in the Banquet 220c. But in the Banquet Socrates stands in the vestibule of the neighboring house not in the house. Why? Because the house of Agathon to which they go for the banquet is open and it would be very embarrassing to be seen from the house standing. Here as we shall see the house to which they go now is very much closed. This similarity between Protagoras and the Banquet is important as we shall see later. The personel of the Protagoras is to a large extent identical with the personal of the Banquet. What that means is no matter. Now let us go on.

Student: "And I think that the door keeper, who was a eunuch, and who was probably annoyed at the great inroad of the Sophists, must have heard us talking. At any rate, when we knocked at the door, and he opened and saw us, he grumbled: They are Sophists--he is not at home; and instantly gave the door a hearty bang with both his hands. Again we knocked, and he answered without opening: Did you not hear me say that

he is not at home, fellows? But, my friend, I said, you need not be alarmed; for we are not Sophists, and we are not come to see Callias, but we want to see Protagoras; and I must request you to announce us. At last, after a good deal of difficulty, the man was persuaded to open the door."

Yes. Well you see the subject of the non-reported conversation between Socrates and Hippocrates was such perhaps that the eunuch who heard it regarded Socrates and Hippocrates as Sophists. That does not mean very much because this man was surely very incompetent to judge because anything that went beyond his narrow horizon was probably Sophistry.

Now the eunuch, the lowest of the low, considers himself superior to the Sophists. Obviously. The Sophists are even less masculine than eunuchs for reasons we have discussed because Sophists are men who talk and talk and talk and sit at home like women. In the eunuch's perspective even the manly Hippocrates, to say nothing of Socrates, can appear to be a Sophist. The eunuch is angry as you see although eunuchs are supposed to be particularly tame, like castrated horses and bulls. See Xenophon's Education of Cyrus Book VII, Chapter 5, Paragraph 59 to 65. But of course this man suffers from unusual provocation. The big crowds of Sophists and all their followers cause him a lot of trouble, he constantly has to open the door for them.

Now Socrates and Hippocrates as you have seen do not use a stick for knocking at the door, as Hippocrates had done when knocking at Socrates' house. The door is shut twice before their noses. The doorman is a kind of , the hellhounds, an enemy of the Sophists. This enemy of the Sophists makes access to the Sophists very difficult whereas access to Socrates even before daybreak is very easy as we have seen. The Sophists are very much indoor men. Socrates was always, as Xenophon put it, in the open, in the market place. So one wonders whether he was in the marketplace also during night time or before daybreak which of course cannot be the meaning. Of course Socrates does also not want money for his teaching. It is also easier to have access to a man who does not demand money for being seen than a man who demands money for being seen. In the Clouds, the oldest presentation of Socrates, Socrates is difficult of access. But there a pupil, an adherent of Socrates, watches the entrance. In the Protagoras a eunuch, an enemy of the Sophist, watches the entrance. So it's much more difficult to get in to see the Sophist Protagoras than it is to get in to the Sophist, as he is presented in Clouds, Socrates. The Socrates of the Clouds we can also say is difficult of access because he wishes to be difficult of access, in contradistinction to Protagoras who is difficult of access, not because he wishes to be difficult of access, but because he has such an unsympathetic doorman.

In the Protagoras the emasculated doorman tries to prevent Socrates and Hippocrates from seeing Protagoras. In the Gorgias

Callicles eagerly welcomes Socrates and to see Gorgias. The Gorgias, to repeat, is a voluntary dialogue--easy access to the hero. The Protagoras is a compulsory dialogue and the hero is difficult of access.

Now this difficulty of access to the Sophist is imitated by the plan of the Protagoras. We don't enter immediately but we go first to the conversation with the comrade then through the conversation with Hippocrates and then only do we come to Protagoras himself. So now let us read the sequel. The doorman eventually has no choice but to open and so he opens the door.

Student: Is this some sort of tribute to Socrates that he was able to persuade the doorman?

Socrates must have had some authority in his voice. Yes it is of course clear that this description could never have been given in a performed dialogue. Only by narrating could he bring out this amusing scene and the immediate sequel which is in a way more amusing.

Student: "When we entered, we found Protagoras taking a walk in the cloister; and next to him, on one side, were walking Callias, the son of Hipponicus, and Paralus, the son of Pericles, who, by the mother's side, is his half-brother, and Charmides, the son of Glaucon. On the other side of him were Xanthippus, the other son of Pericles, Philippides, the son of Philomeus; also Antimoerus of Mende, who of all the disciples of Protagoras is the most famous, and intends to make sophistry his profession. A train of listeners followed him; the greater part of them appeared to be foreigners, whom Protagoras had brought with him out of the various cities visited by him in his journeys, he like Orpheus, attracting them by his voice, and they following. I should mention also that there were some Athenians in the company. Nothing delighted me more than the precision of their movements: they never got into his way at all; but when he and those who were with him turned back, then the band of listeners parted regularly on either side; he was always in front, and they wheeled round and took their places behind him in perfect order.

Yes. The most visible of all is our hero Protagoras. And he walks around. The word is the same in Greek. And he is quite audible in what he says. He is accompanied by six men mentioned by name. They belong mostly to the "cream" of Athenian patricians. You see Pericles and Callias is an old family and of course Charmides is the uncle of Plato. Protagoras is compared to Orpheus, you know Orpheus, the man who charms men and beasts as well. And he is Orpheus-like and accompanied by a chorus. His chorus is however different from a theatrical chorus in that it listens only. The only man with a voice is the chorus leader. Now the chorus is of course an apt emblem. A chorus means music and music is a fundamental

part of education. Now let us come to the next.

Student: "After him, as Homer says, 'I lifted my eyes and saw' Hippias the Elean sitting in the opposite cloister on a chair of state, and around him were seated on benches Eryximachus, the son of Acumenus, and Phaedrus the Myrrhinusian, and Andron the son of Androtion, and there were strangers whom he had brought with him from his native city of Elis, and some others: they were putting to Hippias certain physical and astronomical questions, and he, ex cathedra, was determining their several questions to them and discoursing of them."

Yes. Now Hippias is presented as sitting, as you see and three men mentioned by name. He sits in the center of a circle, not at the head of an army, like Protagoras. And here a subject is mentioned: physical things and astronomical things. Astronomical things are of special interest because in Aristophanes' Clouds, his oldest presentation of Socrates, the old peasant who wants to become Socrates' pupil has some interest in all subjects that Socrates teaches except astronomy--that is too far away, too high. Now here in the case of Hippias comrades ask questions and do not merely listen. Two of them occur in important positions in the Banquet, Eryximachus and Phaedrus.

At the beginning of this passage he quotes Homer, "this one I also saw" but if you would look it up you would see that Homer does not say it. Odysseus says it. And we draw this provisional conclusion that Socrates is here, appearing here in this dialogue, in the role of Odysseus. Hippias, I mean the words quoted that appear there refers not to Hippias, but to

. But only to the phantom of . So the true of physics and astronomy we can conclude is not Hippias. Hippias was known as a foolish man. Let us turn now to the third group.

Student: "Also, 'my eyes beheld Tantalus'; for Prodicus the Cean was at Athens: he had been lodged in a room which, in the days of Hipponicus, was a storehouse; but, as the house was full, Callias had cleared this out and made the room into a guest chamber. Now Prodicus was still in bed, wrapped up in sheepskins and bedclothes, of which there seemed to be a great heap; and there were sitting by him on the couches near, Pausanias of the deme of Cerameis, and with Pausanias was a youth quite young, who is certainly remarkable for his good looks, and, if I am not mistaken, is also of a fair and gentle nature. I thought that I heard him called Agathon, and my suspicion is that he is the beloved of Pausanias. There was this youth and also there were the two Adeimantuses, one the son of Cepis, and the other of Leucolophides, and some others. I was very anxious to hear what Prodicus was saying, for he seems to me to be an all-wise and

inspired man; but I was not able to get into the inner circle, and his fine deep voice made an echo in the room which rendered his words inaudible."

Yes. Now Prodicus is compared to Tantalus. Tantalus suffers from pain. And Prodicus is lying in an empty storehouse. You know just as Tantalus will not get any food Prodicus will not get any food. Prodicus is the least conspicuous of the three Sophists which is indicated by the fact that he says here, "and Prodicus was also there." He is the closest of the three to Socrates but there is no dialogue with Prodicus, as I mentioned before. Prodicus lies in bed. He is a soft man.

Here there are four men mentioned by name. Two of them again speakers at the Banquet, Pausanias and Agathon. The subject of their conversation is inaudible because of the acoustics. Socrates says only in the case of Prodicus that he was eager to hear what he says. But he couldn't hear. Prodicus is perhaps the least accessible of the three. You come in and you see immediately Protagoras and then you see Hippias and then because Prodicus is lying in a special room he is the least accessible.

Now here is the same passage in the Odyssey, also Socrates sees Tantalus and that is Prodicus, and he sees the shadow of

and that is Hippias, and one is eager to know who is the Homeric equivalent of Protagoras. Now this, I will anticipate later developments and tell you that 93e following. Protagoras is Achilles, in a way the greatest of all heroes but in that scene described in the eleventh book of the Odyssey Achilles is no longer that great hero but has become converted from all belief in courage and prefers the life of a laborer, a poor laborer, who is alive to the misery of the dead.

Only among the companions of Prodicus do we find a couple of lovers. When he mentions the names Pausanias and Agathon they are meaningful because of the Banquet. The other two men have the same names, Adeimantus. Now it was Prodicus' specialty to make a distinction between different words which seemed to mean the same thing but meaning in fact different things. We will find some examples of it later. Here there is the same name Adeimantus but they are different.

Protagoras has the same number of companions mentioned by name as Socrates in the Gorgias. Whether that is meaningful is another matter. Now we come to a brief scene of some importance.

Student: "No sooner had we entered than there followed us Alcibiades the beautiful, as you say, and I believe you; and also Critias the son of Callaeschrus."

Yes. Now Socrates and Hippocrates come late as Socrates and Alcibiades came in the Gorgias. After them come only Alcibiades and Critias. The question is, do they belong to Socrates? as the other men belong to one or the other of these wise men.

Socrates was accused of corrupting Critias and Alcibiades according to Xenophon, and thus harmed the city; under democracy Alcibiades and under oligarchy Critias. If they belong to

Socrates, Socrates has three companions, just as Hippias.

Socrates tells the Protagoras, as we shall see, to the comrade while sitting. We have seen that in 310a. And as we will see the conversation with Protagoras takes place also while they are sitting. Now sitting has something to do with idleness. I have the only observation which is in a very late order: statement of the dignity of man, which is quite unknown. "The wise Protagoras will warn us not to sit too much that is not to loosen the reigns of the rational part whereby the soul measures, judges, and examines everything and not to lose it in slothful idleness." I tell you this for whatever it may be worth.

The conversation between Socrates and Hippocrates takes place while they are walking around, like Protagoras. There is no corollary with Prodicus, unless you say the very beginning of the dialogue with Hippocrates where Socrates is lying in bed as Prodicus is lying in bed here. But much more important: the Protagoras we see here presents Socrates as Odysseus descent to Hades. I have given you some indication of that from the beginning. The very first words: "From where come you out of sight?" Now Plato makes this pun more than once: (goes to the board) Hades and the invisible. In the Phaedo and in the Gorgias also. The invisibility of ideas but also the invisibility of wisdom. In the dialogue Sophists Hades is called Sophist.

But there is also an amusing story. This takes place in the house of Callias and here I must give you a piece of Athenian gossip. Callias was married and he had a strange mother-in-law who started to have illicit relations with her son-in-law Callias. And so Callias lived together with the daughter and the mother, like Pluto with his wife and daughter and therefore he was called Hades in Athenian gossip. And this, by the way is the background for Xenophon's writing Economicus because the father-in-law was called and in the Economicus the hero is called only without the father's name. But he could very well be the father-in-law of Callias. Now this tells Socrates a very long story of what a wonderful educator of his young wife he was. He was perhaps one or two years married and she was completely innocent when she married him and he educated her to be a model of a wife and well, we don't know how this wife looked ten years later. Our imagination is fertilized by this reading of the speech by on the mysteries in which the story of Callias' household is told. But this jocular point is not unworthy of Plato and worthy of mention.

We are in Hades. We have confirmed that. And Hades is of course a place of terror from which one would run away. Now in a way this is exactly what happens at the end of the Protagoras where Socrates, in a way, runs away. And in this situation of having run away from Hades he meets the comrades and in a relieved way he tells them of the adventures in Hades. Socrates belongs to the world of the living, to the city, but he has one stint in Hades, he has once been with the Sophists.

Now there are all together nineteen individuals mentioned by name here in this section and in the whole dialogue of Protagoras. In the center, depending on from where you count, is either Phaedrus, the hero of the dialogue Phaedrus, and also in a way of the Banquet; and according to another counting, Eryximachus, the physician who in the Banquet exchanges his place with Aristophanes.

Now the account of the Sophists here is obviously comic. I think there is universal agreement on that. And this of course could only have been done in a narrated dialogue. The dialogue on Socrates meeting with the Sophists had to be narrated since Socrates could not speak of their ridiculous character to the Sophists themselves. He could not bring out there ridiculous character in conversation with them, but only in conversation about them. But why is it a narrated dialogue preceded by a performed dialogue? In other words, to what kind of people ~~does~~ Socrates narrate the conversation? A simple answer. To quite ordinary people. There is nothing extraordinary, nothing secret, about what went on at that meeting. Nevertheless that meeting with Protagoras still needs a decent justification. And that decent justification is given by the central section, the conversation with Hippocrates. Socrates goes there for the sake of Hippocrates.

There is another point to consider. If Sophistry is ridiculous, it cannot be truly harmful. See Aristotle's Poetics Chapter V. But why was it presented as ridiculous? i.e. as not harmful? The simplest answer and here I come back to something, it could be understood as a plea for the toleration of Sophists by the city. Such toleration might be necessary if philosophy is to be tolerated for the city is perhaps not able to properly distinguish between philosophy and Sophistry. This decree of liberalism I regard as perfectly compatible with Socrates and Plato. I don't know whether it meets your bill it is of some importance I believe.

Now let us read the next speech.

Student: "On entering we stopped a little, in order to look about us, and then walked up to..."

Now wait a minute! Who are the "we?" That's the question. You see if you look three lines below, three lines preceding, at the beginning of the preceding speech. Who are the "we" there?

Student: Hippocrates and Socrates.

And who are the "we" in the next speech?

Student: Presumably those two plus Alcibiades and...

Possibly at least. Possibly at least. Now go on.

Student: "On entering we stopped a little, in order to look about us, and then walked up to Protagoras, and I said: Protagoras, Hippocrates and I have come to see you.
Do you wish, he said, to speak with me alone, or in the presence of the company?"

Let us stop here. Now as I have said before the "we" now who enter might be Socrates, Alcibiades, Critias, and Hippocrates and that would mean that Alcibiades and Critias belong to Socrates' group, just as Hippias has his group, Prodicus, and Protagoras.

Now Socrates knows Protagoras and Protagoras knows him. That is probably clear. Hippocrates does not know Protagoras. That's different in the Gorgias where Socrates' companion knows Gorgias better than Socrates does. Socrates knows Protagoras from earlier meetings. There is a relative frequency of Socrates meeting with Protagoras, maybe two maybe three times maybe more. Contrasted to the infrequency of his coming to Callias' house. You see he did not know the doorman. The meetings which Socrates had with Protagoras were not for the sake of Hippocrates and are not reported by either Plato or Socrates. That we must figure out for ourselves. We know only of this particular meeting.

So Protagoras in his reply suggests that Socrates and Hippocrates might have something private to talk about, something personal, something to hide from the public. Now what does Socrates say to that?

Student: "Whichever you please, I said; you shall determine when you have heard the purpose of our visit."

Yes. Socrates says no, but perhaps you Protagoras might like to have a private meeting. In other words, Protagoras presents Socrates and Hippocrates with the choice and Socrates turns the tables: no, you choose. We will see this as of some importance. And now Socrates states the subject of the visit.

Student: "And what is your purpose? he said.
I must explain, I said, that my friend Hippocrates is a native Athenian; he is the son of Apollodorus, and of a great and prosperous house, and he is himself in natural ability quite a match for anybody of his own age. I believe that he aspires to political eminence; and this he thinks that conversation with you is most likely to procure for him. And now you can determine whether you would wish to speak to him of your teaching alone or in the presence of the company."

You see here that Socrates says nothing about Hippocrates' nature. He says he is supposed to be gifted. He doesn't say that he is. He says something about his family background, his social position. The son of a wealthy house etc. And then he also says

something about his motive, but qualified, he "seems" by his nature to be competitive with his contemporaries. He seems to me, to Socrates, to desire to become famous in the city.

From this it would follow that there is no need for private talks. This is an average boy, there is nothing interesting about him. But nevertheless Socrates repeats here again you Protagoras must make your choice, between private and public discussion. And then in that long speech of Protagoras which follows, which we cannot read today, Protagoras makes his choice. So Protagoras makes his choice in favor of public discussion. And the reason given in a very long, and beautiful, and pompous speech is "I have nothing to hide!" But the other Sophists hide their teaching but I do not." And he is very foolish to hide anything because that only makes people more suspicious. And so it will be public but Socrates has a feeling, Socrates is very clever as you see, that the reason that Protagoras wanted to have a public discussion was not that he had nothing to hide but that he wanted to show off before his competitors, the other Sophists.

Now here this statement is quite remarkable. Protagoras is the first Sophist who reveals the fact that he is a Sophist. He is the first Sophist who speaks up. The first who speaks up is almost a literal translation of his name.

And then why did the other Sophists conceal their being Sophists? That we must discuss the next time. So we will continue at this place. And then there are some other long speeches of Protagoras in which he explains the meaning of his art. And after that the discussion begins. But the discussion is unintelligible if we do not hear first Protagoras' own explanation of what his art is. And we go to that next time.

Plato's Protagoras: A course by Professor Leo Strauss in the Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 6 April 14, 1965:

Well, you remember the situation I trust. Socrates had given a description of the three groups of Sophists, Protagoras, Hippias, and Prodicus. Followed by Critias and Alcibiades he entered the room and they approach Protagoras. Socrates confronts Protagoras with a choice. Should this be a private or a public conversation? But Protagoras should not make up his mind before he knows the reason that they came. And Socrates explains that they come for the sake of Hippocrates and the only fact he tells him is that Hippocrates comes from a very prosperous house. Hippocrates is thought to be gifted but Socrates has the impression that he is ambitious, eager for fame in the city. And Protagoras should make his choice between the alternatives of private or public conversation on the basis of this information about Hippocrates. This was the point we reached last time. And now we continue from this point at 316c5.

Protagoras says first you correctly take precaution on my part. Precaution comes from the Greek Prometheus from which the name Prometheus is derived. Socrates is a kind of Prometheus, a fore-seer. Providence for Protagoras. Now will you read that.

Student: "Thank you Socrates for your consideration of me.
For certainly a stranger finding his way into..."

It is a bit more than consideration. Forethought.
May I add he does not simply say a foreigner or stranger but he says what has the meaning almost which in present day jargon would be the word "personality." He knows what kind of man he is. A foreign personality.

Student: "...great cities, and persuading the flower of the youth in them to leave the company of their kinsmen or any other acquaintances, old or young, and live with him, under the idea that they will be improved by his conversation..."

Literally, in order to become better through being together with him. You know being together.

Student: "ought to be very cautious; great jealousies are aroused by his proceedings, and he is the subject of many enmities and conspiracies."

Now jealousies, , is the plural of the Greek word which means envy. Protagoras is thankful to Socrates for his forethought. Men like Protagoras are in danger. We find reference to the danger also in the Gorgias which you might consult 456c to 457b. Gorgias is there and says "rhetoric is a very powerful thing and therefore distrusted for it may be used unjustly." But there is no reference to the injustice of Sophistry in Protagoras. On the contrary, being together with Protagoras makes those who are together with him better. So

what does he have to fear? Well, precisely this. Because people are not merely concerned with their sons becoming better but they are also very much concerned with by whom, through whom, the sons will become better. They want the sons to become better through them and not through foreigners or at any rate people other than themselves. There is a passage on this subject in Xenophon's Education of Cyrus Book III, Chapter 1, Section 38 and following. I read to you: "When the company broke up after the evening meal, Cyrus asked an Prince 'Tell me where is that friend of yours who used to hunt with us and whom, as it seemed to me you admired so much?' 'Do you not know that my father put him to death?' 'And why?' said Cyrus, 'What fault did he find with him?' 'He thought he corrupted me and yet I tell you Cyrus he was so gentle and so brave, so beautiful in soul that when he came to die he called me to him and said do not be angry with your father for putting me to death. What he does is not done from malice but from ignorance. And the sins of ignorance I hold are unintentional.' And at that Cyrus could only say, 'Poor soul, I grieve for him.' But the king, the father who put him to death, i.e. the man who did to that wise man what the city did to Socrates, spoke in his own defense, 'Remember this, Cyrus, that the man who finds another with his wife kills him not only because he believes that he has turned the woman to folly but because he has robbed him of her love. Even so I was envious of that man who seemed to put himself between my son and me and steal away his respect.'" So in other words Socrates was killed by the fathers because they were envious of Socrates. That is a very important conversation because it is ordinarily not stated. For example it is not stated in the Apology of Socrates or elsewhere by Plato but it is important not all fathers were envious because some of them agreed with Socrates' view. But this is an important consideration. And it is here indicated by Protagoras in his own case.

A man in Protagoras' position must use caution. This much is clear. Now if this is so what will follow as the practical question at hand, should that be a private or public discussion? What is more cautious? Private or public? Well, you seem to know.

Student: Private conversation is usually more cautious.

Yes. Now let us see whether that is the conclusion that Protagoras draws.

Student: But only if it is not known to take place.

What?

Student: A private discussion, the fact of which is also private, is cautious.

Yes but still if it is not particularly emphasized no one else would know that Protagoras said it should be private. They talk to him privately and it is just a private talk. No one else hears it. So what suspicions could this arouse?

Student: Socrates has come up to him in public, said Hippocrates desires his education, desires to be educated by Protagoras, and it says that it is Protagoras to say whether this is to be private or public. Protagoras says if Protagoras says it is to be private, he is telling everybody else in this whole room...

No. The other people come to them only later. Only the surrounding of Protagoras, his adherents. But look at it, not every private conversation is of such danger. For example he could be discussing remuneration and which is surely, properly treated privately and in no way to be regarded as dangerous. Yes? We do many things only in private without incurring any suspicion. You can figure that out for yourself. Now go on.

Student: "Now the art of the Sophist is, as I believe, of..."

Now let us read. "No I assert..." "I assert." "I" underlined. "I assert." I.e. that is an assertion peculiar to me. Yes.

Student: "...of great antiquity; but in ancient times those who practised it, fearing this odium, veiled and disguised themselves under various names, some under that of poets, as Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides, some, of hierophants and prophets, as Orpheus and Musaeus, and some, as I observe, even under the name of gymnastic masters, like Iccus of Tarentum, or the more recently celebrated Herodicus, now of Selymbria and formerly of Megara, who is a first-rate Sophist. Your own Agathocles pretended to be a musician, but was really an eminent Sophist; also Pythocleides the Cean; and there were many others; and all of them, as I was saying, adopted these arts as veils or disguises because they were afraid of the odium which they would incur."

One really should translate literally: "they envied..." So Protagoras gives here already by indication his decision. There will be no private conversations because I am not afraid.

Sophistry is an old thing. But the former Sophists and some present ones conceal their being Sophists because Sophistry is hated, distrusted, and an object of envy. Protagoras reveals here nine men as Sophists. Homer is the

leading figure. The central ones are Orpheus and Musaeus, if you count properly. Now Protagoras we have seen was a kind of Orpheus and described as such by Socrates.

To repeat: the main point is that this was the older Sophists, Sophists here is the wide sense of wise men, they concealed their being Sophists. They concealed their wisdom because of its dangerous character.

And Protagoras does not do that. Why?

Student: "But that is not my way, for I do not believe that they effected their purpose, which was to deceive the government, who were not blinded by them; and as to the people, they have no understanding, and only repeat what their rulers are pleased to tell them"

Literally, "the many do not notice anything," so to speak. They are just plain dumb.

Student: "Now to run away, and to be caught in running away, is the very height of folly, and also greatly increases the exasperation of mankind..."

"Human beings!" Now you see the joke here is this. distinguished from human beings but there is another distinction--gods and human beings. The are a kind of are almost related to the as gods are human beings. The classic passage regarding this distinction is in Xenophon's Hero Chapter VII which you might read. I only hope the translation doesn't ruin these points.

Student: "...and also increases the exasperation of human beings; for they regard him who runs away as a desperato..."

No, no, no. They regard him as a scoundrel. In other words the other thing was they hate him because they are envious of him. But men can be envious of very decent men. And there is no reflection on the character of the men if people are envious of them. But in addition, since he uses concealment he is also regarded as a scoundrel.

So concealment of Sophistry results from a fear of the most powerful men of the city, and who are clever, and therefore the concealment is ineffective and hence foolish. It increases the danger. Suspicion on the top of envy. In other words the wise men of old were mistaken. And Protagoras has this characteristic posture which we know so well from later times --the contempt for antiquity. These wise men so worshipped and revered are not so wise. I am wiser.

The many do not notice anything. This is of course a harsh statement to make in a democracy as Athens was at that time. But he could make it safely here because those present

are not democrats. But even the men powerful in the city are only human beings. These things do not come out in the translation so I thought I should mention it.

Student: Is it true in fact that these men ran into trouble because they were suspected of being sophists?

Well he does not give us proof in any case, in any of these cases. But perhaps he suppressed the examples where evidence of persecution existed. That could be. But he merely says on the basis of his experience and the funniest thing if I may mention it in passing is this: that shortly thereafter Protagoras himself was the object of persecution and because of his alleged impiety his books were burned and he was expelled.

But let us first...this passage is ironical in that sense that shows that Protagoras claims to be particularly prudent and he is in fact not prudent.

Now let us go on where we left off.

Student: "...therefore I take an entirely opposite course, and acknowledge myself to be a Sophist and instructor of mankind..."

Of "human beings"; that is very important. Yes.

Student: "such an open acknowledgment appears to me to be a better sort of caution than concealment. Nor do I neglect other precautions, and therefore I hope, as I may say, by the favour of heaven that no harm will come of the acknowledgment that I am a Sophist."

Yes. But "to speak with God." Now Protagoras is the first to speak up. And that is indicated by his name. Candor you see here is a kind of caution. In other words it is not simple candor, it is a calculated candor. Yet it is not enough for Protagoras' protection. He needs also others kinds of precautionary measures. And the question is of course whether this reference to "with God's help" is not also part of his precaution.

Now let us go on. And never forget the fact that shortly thereafter he himself became persecuted. All his precautionary measures proved to be inadequate.

Student: "And I have been now many years in the profession--for all my years when added up are many; there is no one here present of whom I might not be the father. Wherefore I should much prefer conversing with you, if you want to speak with me, in the presence of the company."

"Of everyone, of all who are inside," Yes? O.k.
Now in other words the conclusion is: candor, public discussion of everything. But it is not quite public as you see. Why?

Student: Because it is a select company inside.

Yeah, sure.

How successful Protagoras' devices are is shown by his longevity. I mean for seventy years, we know he lived for almost seventy years. Like who else?

Student: Socrates.

Socrates, yes.

He will therefore answer Socrates' and Hippocrates' questions in public, if only before the indoors' public. The irony is this: Protagoras was persecuted for his impiety and there is no evidence that the wise men of old were. That is a point we made before.

So it shows Protagoras' lack of practical wisdom. One can also say that to emphasize one's candor is to make people doubt one's candor. You know persons who use the expression "Frankly" I do not know, when you ask them about the time. And they are in most cases people very little given to candor when they speak. And here we have a large example.

In Plato's Dialogue Theatetus, 180c to d, we read this: "As Socrates approves the way of the men of old who hid things with the help of poetry, whereas a more recent, wiser man states them openly so that even shoemakers can learn their wisdom." That refers to the same phenomenon which Protagoras has in mind.

One can say, with necessary qualification, that this is precisely what enlightenment means: to broadcast the things that were previously preserved.

And now.

Student: "As I suspected that he would like to have a little display and glorification in the presence of Prodicus and Hippias, and would gladly show us to them in the light of his admirers..."

"Lovers."

Student: "...I said: But why should we not summon Prodicus and Hippias and their friends to hear us?
Very good, he said."

Now Socrates might have suggested the participation of Prodicus and Hippias anyway. You will recall in 314b to c he said something about a deliberation with wiser men

about whether it is wise for Hippocrates to become a pupil of Protagoras. But Protagoras' vanity makes it compulsory for Socrates to invite this large company.

Socrates', as he says here, has come to suspect, on the basis of Protagoras' words, that he can have the conversation in front of everyone indoors, that Protagoras prefers public discussion, not in order to show his frankness, but in order to show off before his competitors. He perceives Protagoras' wish. And therefore he says politely, Prodicus and Hippias should listen to us, not to you.

Yes?

Student: Actually this conversation is not very public because the others are also Sophists.

Yes. This is what I meant. But, but they are also Athenians, the cream of Athenian society.

Well, you can liken it to the 18th, Century when the cream of the French nobility went along with the philosophes, as they were then called. And only through the French Revolution did they learn that this was not wise and then they changed their minds. And here the situation is just a bit different. This was not a social movement towards the redistribution of property. But we shall see something about the way in which they are threatened very soon, these pillars of the upper classes.

Now let us go on.

Student: "Suppose, said Callias, that we hold a council in which you may sit and discuss.--This was agreed upon, and great delight was felt at the prospect of hearing wise men talk; we ourselves took the chairs and benches, and arranged them by Hippias, where the other benches had been already placed. Meanwhile Callias and Alcibiades got Prodicus out of bed and brought him in and his companions."

Yes. Now you see there is a certain emphasis on Hippias, the benches. Rather than on Prodicus, the beds. Now on the other hand Prodicus is much more deferentially treated than Hippias. He is brought in by Callias, who is not only the owner of the house but as he will appear later the bottle-holder for Protagoras; and by Alcibiades, the bottle-holder for Socrates. Callias is certainly responsible for the comfort of the characters of the conversation, he asks them to sit down. And the conversation takes place in the region of Hippias, the physicist. They all expect a dialogue between the Sophists, not between Protagoras and Socrates. So that it will become a dialogue between Protagoras and Socrates is a surprise, because

Socrates is not such a famous man as these three Sophists. He is still very young. Yes?

Student: "When we were all seated, Protagoras said:
Now that the company are assembled, Socrates,
tell me about the young man of whom you were
just now speaking."

Now you see here Protagoras does not want a full restatement of what Socrates has told him privately, only that part which concerns Hippocrates, not that part dealing with the question whether it would be a public or a private discussion. Of course not because this has been settled. Now how does Socrates state this?

Student: "I replied: I will begin at the same point, Protagoras, and tell you once more the purport of my visit: this is my friend Hippocrates,...

Now friend is not in there, "this here Hippocrates."

Student: "...this here is Hippocrates who is desirous of making your acquaintance;...

Literally, "of being together with you."

Student: "...who is desirous of being together with you; he would like to know what will happen to him if he is with you. I have no more to say."

"This much, not more, is our speech."

Now this is a repetition of that speech we had in 316b to c. Now repetitions in authors like Plato are not like repetitions in a masters thesis and in any other work. There is never a mere repetition. Which means never a literal repetition. There is always a deviation, an omission, an addition, or both. And the changes are more important than what is common to the two or more statements.

Now if we compare these two statements here we see Socrates omits now the description of Hippocrates. And he adds here what Hippocrates wishes to know, what happens to him if he becomes your pupil. Since he omits now the reference to Hippocrates political intention, it becomes a question what Protagoras will teach him, for after all he might wish to become a Sophist himself. Those who hear only the repetition, what we hear now, must understand Protagoras' answer to apply to all potential pupils. Or else they must admire Protagoras' power, as if he had guessed at this boy's political ambitions because Socrates had not told this in their presence. Do you see that point? Good. Go on.

Student: "Protagoras answered: Young man, if you associate with me, on the very first day you will return home a better man than you came, and better on the second day than on the first, and better every day than you were on the day before."

At the beginning it is literally, "Protagoras took up", or "seized":

Protagoras replies as you see to Hippocrates, not to Socrates. He takes over. Socrates has introduced him, has come as a kind of tag-along, but now he is out of the picture. But Socrates is not so easily pushed aside. He replies for naturally he is the one who asked on behalf of young Hippocrates.

The situation is now I believe clear. Everyone knows why Hippocrates came, why Socrates came, and Protagoras has now given them an answer. He educates human beings, that means he makes them better. And the implication is that he does this better than anyone else.

Now what does Socrates say?

Student: "When I heard this, I said: Protagoras, I do not at all wonder at hearing you say this; even at your age, and with all your wisdom, if any one were to teach you what you did not know before, you would become better no doubt:..."

Socrates immediately deflates his claim: "everyone who teaches anybody something makes him better." So this is not an astounding or extraordinary claim.

Student: "...but please to answer in a different way--I will give you an example to explain how. Let me suppose that Hippocrates, instead of desiring to be with you, wished to be with the young man Zeuxippus of Heraclea, who has lately been in Athens, and he had heard him say, as he has heard you say, that every day he would grow and become better if he was with him: and then suppose that he were to ask him, "In what shall I become better, and in what shall I grow?" Zeuxippus would answer, "In painting." And suppose that he went to Orthagoras the Theban, and heard him say the same thing, and asked him, "In what shall I become better day by day?" He would reply, "In flute-playing." Now I want you to make the same sort of answer to this young man and to me, who am asking questions on his account. When you say that on the first day on which he is with you he will return home a better man, and on every day will grow in like manner,--in what, Protagoras, will he be better? and about what?

Yes now Socrates deflates the claim by assuming that better means wiser and that wiser means wiser in an art, this or that art. And therefore there is nothing particular about it. Every artisan...well, the shoemaker could say that he makes his apprentice better every day, namely better at shoemaking.

The examples here are of course not shoemaking but music and silent. In both examples the teachers are strangers. But the way in which Socrates puts the question was quite common. But there is one great difference from the examples we have seen here and in the Gorgias. Do you see that point? No. Well, the way in which he phrases the question. He does not ask Protagoras to give the answer in the case of Zeuxippus, it is painting, and in the case of Orthagoras it is flute-playing. He does not put Protagoras to the indignity of having to answer the question of what the two arts of these men are. Perhaps because Protagoras is so high, so aloof that he would not know these two artisans, one of whom is still very young. But also it would be improper for Socrates to ask this type of question of a personality of the stature of Protagoras.

Yes. Go on.

Student: "When Protagoras heard me say this he replied:
You ask questions fairly, and I like to answer a
question which is fairly put."

So now he replies to Socrates, and of course along with Hippocrates. Hippocrates himself could not have asked him well, Hippocrates could not have put such questions to him as Socrates could. That goes without saying.

Yes.

Student: "If Hippocrates comes to me he will not experience the sort of drudgery with which other Sophists are in the habit of insulting their pupils; who, when they have just escaped from the arts, are taken and driven back into them by these teachers, and made to learn calculation, and astronomy, and geometry, and music (he gave a look at Hippias as he said this); but if he comes to me, he will learn to order his own house in the best manner, and he will be able to speak and act for the best in the affairs of the State."

"Affairs of the 'city'" of course.

And now you see Protagoras claims to be superior to all other Sophists. In a way he accepts the popular judgment of Sophists, in his way, with the exception of himself. He does not teach arts, for he knows, through his private conversations with Socrates, what Hippocrates wishes

to learn. And he mentions here, only with special emphasis here, the mathematics. No mathematics with me, you don't have to worry. Because these are all mathematical arts as you can see: reckoning, and astronomy, and geometry and music. Music obviously has the mathematical implication.

And you see also the virtue of the narrated dialogue again: this remark that at this point Hippias, or rather Protagoras, gave a dirty look in the direction of Hippias could not have been brought out in a performed dialogue but only in a narrated one.

And what will he teach to him? It is not sufficiently translated by prudence. It means something more specific. "Being well advised," regarding the domestic things. So that he can administer his house in the best manner. And about the affairs of the City so that he will be most able both to do and to say the things of the City.

Now there is a very great difference about what he says about his economic teaching and his political teaching. He doesn't say that he will learn from him to administer the affairs of the City "in the best manner." He says this only in regarding his own household.

Protagoras does not teach mathematics, we see here, but only the human things, like Socrates, according to a popular notion based on quite a few passages in Plato and Xenophon. So in other words Protagoras has made clear what it is that he teaches, that it is clearly not painting and not flute-playing nor mathematics nor of course shoemaking, but other things. It is not an art at all this "being well advised." Let us say prudence. Now how does Socrates interpret that statement?

Student: "Do I understand you, I said; and is your meaning that you teach the art of politics, and that you promise to make men good citizens?"

Yes, let us stop here. He uses the word here of the political art, or political science. Now if this is an early dialogue, as many believe it to be, then this would be the first occurrence of the term political science and we as political scientists have to respect it properly.

Socrates you see here drops the distinction between the art regarding the household and the political art, and speaks only of the political art. It is wise for him to drop this reference to the economic art because the economic art, the art of ruling the household is of course a monarchical thing, the father. And therefore it is compared very easily with the royal art, the father rules the household and in a way in which the king rules the kingdom. Yes?

Student: How about the word that is translated by the word prudence?

Well, means good giving advise to oneself ~~on~~ others. It is not in itself the act of practical choice. But it can of course be easily understood. Now Aristotle makes a distinction in the Sixth Book of the Ethics, he speaks of this thing, by itself and where he makes very clear that there is a difference but it is not necessarily the Platonic usage. But it is of some interest that Protagoras calls it "well-advisedness" rather than prudence.

Student: You said that it was probably wise to drop the discussion of the household science...

Even the mention of it because of the monarchic implications.

Student: Well why does he want to drop the monarchic implications?

Well, we are in Athens and Protagoras is a stranger, that will come out very clearly. And Socrates wants to help Protagoras against unfair attacks.

You see that Protagoras' claim as interpreted by Socrates is that Protagoras teaches the political art. He does not teach the Sophistic art. And also, Protagoras teaches an art, whether he likes it or not. And that is also the reason why he says now, he-men. Contrary to your contempt for political leaders, of which he had spoken before, you must regard them as as another advisor you see. You cannot speak in this contemptuous way here in Athens of the political leaders.

Protagoras as you see here from his answer is highly pleased with Socrates' restatement of his claim. Yes?

Student: Well another thing that Socrates does here is to blur the distinction, I mean Protagoras said what he taught. He teaches the well-ordering of the household and the way to act and speak well in the City. But Socrates makes him almost say that he teaches the well-ordering of the City, how to make the people good citizens. Which is what Protagoras said really.

That is true, yes. But since he had spoken before that he is educating human beings and that they become better by being with him, this is not a change.

Student: Well, do they become better at being citizens, in the sense of being able to well order the City or do they become better at getting what they...

Yes. But this we do not yet know. There is a certain

ambiguity. That is exactly the point. But we do not know that yet. But Protagoras claims to educate human beings. He claims that they become better simply and that everyone would understand in the common, what we would say morally better. And also politically better, and in other words he makes them better citizens, better rulers. Yes?

Student: When he said, "what do you mean by that?",
Protagoras answered that he means 'more influential.'

that
Yes, but is somewhat what we just discussed but is this not also a great great kindness by Socrates? to try to prevent him from elaborating this point and to present himself to the Athenians as truly respectable and not only famous in the world.

Student: Well, the thing is that Socrates usually has some strategy in mind when he does a thing like that. He was never so nice to Gorgias for example.

Yes, but in the case of Gorgias, Gorgias came into trouble immediately because he made this ambiguous statement about the relation of rhetoric to justice. You know, that rhetoric can be unjustly used. Protagoras has said nothing of this kind. These things will come out and in addition when Socrates came to Gorgias there was no young boy like Hippocrates present. They were all mature and old men. His responsibility is much greater here than it is in the Gorgias. Yes?

Student: I'm confused on this...in which the two senses of the word humanity and mankind are used. I wonder if you would comment.

All that I said...all right I will repeat it. (writes on the board) Human being, , right. And the other , that is very low, you say it of a slave, yes. Or you say it of any inferior person, very simply only a member of the human species. 'Philanthropic'; the word is derived from that. And it means something like...some people like dogs, others like horses, others like birds, and some like these other...and so it doesn't have a very high meaning. Now Xenophon's Cyrus is praised for his love of human beings which, as a study of this education of Cyrus shows, is a very thing. He loved human beings because he needed them so badly. So is it clear now?

Student: Yes.

And now this of course includes both sexes and this

other applies only to members of the male sex. Do you see that? Well. I hate to say that but I have to!

Student: is the identical distinction and term
 isn't it?

 Well, in German it is . And it means more
when you say it emphatically.

Student: More pejorative?

 No, no. More perfect. A true human being. So that is
not so simple.

 So where do we stand now? We know now finally, and
much quicker than was in the case of the Gorgias by the
way, what Protagoras' art is, the political art. And
everyone knows what the political art is. Whereas when we
spoke of rhetoric in the Gorgias, no one knew what it
was until Socrates made his long speech.

 And now we see how Socrates goes from here.

Student: "Then, I said, you do indeed possess a noble
art, if there is no mistake about this; for
I will freely confess to you, Protagoras, that
I have a doubt whether this art is capable of
being taught...

 Now wait a minute here. "For you at any rate nothing
else will be said except what I think."

 Socrates is very frank to Protagoras, he says. He
would not say everything he thinks to anyone. Socrates is
very frank to Protagoras. But is he so very frank? Is he
wholly frank to him, does he tell Protagoras everything he
thinks about him? Well I think we have some simple proofs
that he did not. Yes?

Student: His previous definition of a Sophist to Hippocrates.

 Yeah, but no even here when he said that he suspected
that Protagoras wanted to show-off. He did not of course
say this to Protagoras but here one can get an easy way out
by saying frankness does not require that you say everything
you think but only that you do not say anything which you
do not think. Whether that is good enough is a long question.

 Yes. And now comes Socrates' long speech.

Student: "I have a doubt whether this art is capable of
being taught, and yet I know not how to disbelieve
your assertion. And I ought to tell you why I am
of opinion that this art cannot be taught or
communicated by man to man...

In other words it might conceivably be of divine origin and is not a teachable art. Yes.

Student: "I say that the Athenians are an understanding people, and indeed they are esteemed to be such by the other Hellenes. Now I observe when we assemble...

Do you see the nice transition here? I say that the Athenians are wise. When we assemble. Socrates belongs to this wise group, of course.

Student: "...when we are met together in the assembly, and the matter in hand relates to building, the builders are summoned as advisers; when the question is one of shipbuilding, then the shipwrights; and the like of other arts which they think capable of being taught and learned. And if some person offers to give them advice who is not supposed by them to have any more skill in the art than they, but to be good-looking, and rich, and noble, they don't listen to him, but laugh at him, and hoot him, until either he is clamoured down and retires of himself; or he persists, but is dragged away or put out by the constables at the command of the prytanes. This is their way of behaving about professors of the arts...

No, no, "about those things which they believe to susceptible, or possible subjects of arts." What they believe to be, not what are in fact. We will come back to that.

Student: "But when the question is an affair of state, then everybody is free to have a say--carpenter, tinker, cobbler, sailor, passenger; rich and poor, high and low--...

"Noble and base," yes.

Student: "...any one who likes gets up, and no one reproaches him, as in the former case, with not having learned, and having no teacher, and yet giving advice; evidently because they are under the impression that this sort of knowledge cannot be taught...

Yes. "Evidently because they do not think this is teachable."

Now Socrates says then, I do not believe that there is a political art. Such a faculty would have to be of divine origin. This is a way of foreshadowing Protagoras' myth,

following later. But this is not given here.

You see at the beginning here he says 'I' very emphatically. 'I' as that individual Socrates. Well, the Athenians are wise, and everyone else is ~~the~~ same, and 'I' Socrates happen to belong to them. And so he is also derivatively wise. They do not regard the political art as an art, namely they do not regard it as teachable. Now this is a clear warning addressed to Protagoras. Athens is a democracy. Your very notion of the political art endangers political equality. Obviously. If only those who possess the political art are competent to speak or vote on political matters...there is a great risk. The public discussion of Protagoras' public subject, namely the political art, must be conducted in awareness of Protagoras' situation here in Athens.

You see also a bit later what is important here. This twofold distinction is as important today as it was, there are experts, and subjects belong to experts, and political subjects proper, which are not subjects for experts. Only the experts can give some advice but they cannot as such make a political decision. But Socrates does not speak here of simply expertise but of supposed expertise, as an addition of participation in supposedly technical deliberation. That is very wisely chosen. How can non-experts judge of the domain of an art? How can they do that? Who can know what is a medical question? or not?, competently? When we say that this is no longer a medical question we somehow presuppose to know what the medical art is. Unless we should be in a position of a master art which assigns to every particular art its subject and if a man possesses that master art he would of course know the domains and limitations of every particular art.

Now he mentions here when he speaks of technical discussions that beauty, wealth, and nobility are not considered. Whereas, as is the implication, that they are naturally considered, reasonably considered in political discussions. Surely wealth is an important consideration in the political domain, even in a democracy. Although it is not legally so, but factually. And nobility, well old families I think still... And beauty has its ambiguity. A very attractive looking man has certain advantages which other men would not. But it can also refer to the beauty of the soul, to the gentlemanship.

Now in the relation of the artisans here, the shoemakers are in the center. The art of the shoemaker is a protective art. Obviously, it protects our feet. And the political art is also a protective art, generals save cities, protect cities. But it is low. Literally because it protects the lowest part of our body. Shoemakers played in Athens a role, at least in the world in which I grew up, which tailors played. You know, that pale-faced man, sitting at home and lacking the kind of virility that say a blacksmith

surely would have. Yes, I believe we can stop here.

So the political authority of the city of Athens rules out the possibility of a political art. That is clear. Now come beyond that. because someone might say perhaps that cities are not most competent in judging these matters.

Student: Is Socrates playing somewhat with Protagoras here? Because Socrates thrust the term art on Protagoras, he originally claimed, "I make you better," and this would be acceptable in a democratic society. We want our children to be nicer, "I make them nicer." Then Socrates said "No, you teach an art--ah, an art, that is undemocratic."

Very good! In other words, well, we have to take this up later, but since you brought it up we should at least say a word about it. In other words if Protagoras were to teach simple, ordinary decency he should be highly welcome to any city. The political art is very different from ordinary decency. And the ambiguity that at one place he means ordinary decency and another he means the political art is crucial for the whole argument. But we cannot clear up this ambiguity before we are through. Perhaps we can make a provisional effort to understand it.

What is the leading from ordinary decency to the political art?

Protagoras himself is responsible for this ambiguity. And what is at the bottom of it? With what right does anyone, be it Protagoras, or Socrates, or whoever it might be, make this easy transition from ordinary decency to the political art? It is not accidental or due to some corruption of the sophistic mind. Yes?

Student: Could it be because the political art has to do with foreign relations as well as internal justice?

Yes, but, well, yes...in other words the statesman is supposed to make the citizens better in the sense of ordinary decency. I.e. he must have ordinary decency to a much higher degree, in so far as he can communicate it. He must be able to communicate what the ordinary man cannot do.

Student: If he is in the political arena he has to deal with things that can't be handled as easily according to the rules of a private man. He has to know how the rules of ordinary decency are best followed in a situation which the ordinary man would not run into.

Student: "Or take another example: there was Cleinias the younger brother of our friend Alcibiades..."

No. Now again, "of this here Alcibiades."

Student: "...of whom this very same Pericles was the guardian; and he being in fact under the apprehension that Cleinias would be corrupted..."

"...would, of course, be corrupted."

Student: "...would of course be corrupted by Alcibiades, took him away, and placed him in the house of Aripbron to be educated; but before six months had elapsed, Aripbron sent him back, not knowing what to do with him. And I could mention numberless other instances of persons who were good themselves and never yet made any one else good, whether friend or stranger."

Now Pericles is the authority regarding private things, as distinguished from political matters. Protagoras was an acquaintance of Pericles. On the instigation of Pericles Protagoras became a legislator of a new colony whose regime was patterned after that of Athens. This we do not know from Plato but from a later author.

Alcibiades is here portrayed by Socrates as a notorious corruptor, perhaps a worse one than the Sophists, since we do not yet know enough about that. Alcibiades himself speaks in the dialogue called, first Alcibiades of Cleinias as a madman and the two sons of Pericles as two fools.

The main point here is: virtue is not teachable. Neither the polis assumes that nor the best men in the polis assume that.

Student: "Now I, Protagoras, having these examples before me, am inclined to think that virtue cannot be taught."

You see again the transition. Now it is perfectly clear this means virtue in general not with any specification.

Student: "But then again, when I listen to your words, I waver; and am disposed to think that there must be something in what you say, because I know that you have great experience..."

"That you have experience in many things, have learned many things, and some things you have even invented yourself." That is the maximum of what you can expect.

Student: "And I wish that you would, if possible, show me a little more clearly that virtue can be taught. Will you be so good?"

Here the word virtue is used with an article, "the" virtue is not teachable.

Now the question which was brought up before...originally he spoke of well-advisedness. And how do we come from well-advisedness to virtue? By virtue we ordinarily understand or think of what Aristotle called moral virtue. How can we understand that? Well, as Aristotle himself teaches us, no moral virtue without prudence. But if moral virtue is to be teachable, as Protagoras presupposes as a matter of course, it must be identical with the intellectual ingredient of moral virtue, i.e. virtue must be practical wisdom or virtue must be wisdom, virtue must be knowledge. That is implied. When Socrates states virtue is knowledge, he formulates in a way what the Sophists imply. There are differences which we shall see later.

To repeat: Protagoras' claim implies that virtue is equal to practical wisdom, equal to science, technique, whatever you might call it, we will later on see what happens to that. In a way, of course, that is a Socratic equation but Socrates understands it differently than the Sophists do. And that is the theme of this dialogue.

Student: Would you say he compared it to a science?

What? Well, you know in the ordinary usage of this period the distinction is not so clear. When you speak of technique you can speak of knowledge. The strict definition which Aristotle gives in the Ethics cannot always be presupposed but here we have seen Protagoras calling the mathematical sciences technique.

But there is surely a great difference between Socrates and Protagoras in this respect. This will become gradually clear but we cannot yet know precisely what the difference is.

Student: Do you think that this claim of the Sophists which is more than what the Rhetoricians made has something to do with the fact that Sophists are held in disrepute in a way the Orator is not? I'm thinking of...and this is so counter to the democratic feeling...

Well, the democratic feeling would not be for a young boy like Hippocrates. No, that would not be. But the point is that the Sophist is a man mostly coming from a relatively small town, not comparable to Athens, a stranger,

and earning money by services. That's not gentlemanly. That is much more the view of Hippocrates.

Student: What about Gorgias, did he not need to earn money? And there were people who went to learn with him.

Yes but that which he claimed to teach, the art of public speaking, was so manifestly politically important... You know this has to do with both the difference and the non-difference of rhetoric and sophistry. And in the Gorgias, the difference between the two is strongly emphasized. Here it is vague. We do not yet see it here. That will come out later.

Student: In this passage doesn't Socrates reach a ground on which a tyrant could well answer...he says that the arts aren't widely known, such as medicine, and the non-initiated cannot judge the initiated. But we know that Socrates believes that most people are not initiated in the political art. Well, then a man who wanted to be a tyrant, if he said that I happen to be an expert in the political art as a doctor is in the medical art, and you aren't. So you can't judge my action.

Yes but since a tyrant is supposed to be a very unjust man, a tyrant could not possibly say that. The King could. And therefore Socrates does not hesitate to speak of the royal art.

Student: But how could the people, the many could be inclined to the tyrant on the basis of what Socrates says.?!

But the tyrant is supposed to be an absolute ignoramus and in addition, wicked. That's simple.

Student: Isn't it possible that a good man could seem to be wicked and...

Yes. And that leads to something which we cannot enter in this advanced state of our study. But the Kingly art is the highest art is said by Socrates often enough. And the Kingly art is, by definition, is to be practiced in a monarchy and not in a democracy.

Now let us continue where we left off.

Student: "That I will, Socrates, and gladly. But what would you like? Shall I, as an elder, speak to you as younger men in an apologue or myth, or shall I argue out the question?"

"Or should I go through a logos," myth and logos are used here as opposites.

Student: "To this several of the company answered that he should choose for himself
Well, then, he said, I think that the myth will be more interesting."

"More gracious, more graceful."

Now we have here another case of a choice. No longer between public or private but between myth and, let us say, a rational account. Since it is a choice it is another test of Protagoras' ability to give himself good advice, to make good or bad choices.

Now this time the choice is proposed by Protagoras himself, not by Socrates which was the case in the first place. Again Protagoras is asked, at least by many, to make the choice himself. And he chooses to tell a myth. We are not told whether some of them did not say, "rather a myth." And so that he complied with them, this we do not know. Now it is reasonable to say that myth-telling is another of his precautionary measures, perhaps, to which Protagoras has referred to in his speech about the difference between him and the Sophists of olden times. In other words, myth-telling belongs to the qualified character of Protagoras' candor. If this is so is it prudent to emphasize that he tells a myth. Why does he not simply tell the myth without making a choice of it and why does he not simply call it a logos? Socrates himself gives a famous myth at the end of the Gorgias, literally called by him a logos.

Student: Well, if he has made a more prudent choice this time than the last time, does this show any influence of Socrates?

We must see. We must see. Before we are through the myth we cannot judge. If I may say this, I believe the myth is not very good. I mean it is in a way a very wonderful thing, wonderful language and so on, but whether it fulfills its function in the context, I am not so sure.

Student: Is there this similarity between the two choices that Protagoras first raises the question and then offers the choice to his interlocutor and that his interlocutor may offer it back to him?

Yes but still in the first place he wouldn't have to offer them the choice. And in the second place it is not

excluded by the text that some said either a myth or a logos, because only many said. He emphasizes the fact that there is a choice and that he makes the choice and therefore he is fully responsible for it. And we must see, we are compelled to look out to see whether the choice was wise.

And now the famous myth begins from here to 323a⁴. We shall not be able to finish the discussion of the myth today but we can perhaps begin it. As soon as we are through with the myth I will, because it is for many of you perhaps the first time that you read a Platonic myth, digress on the Platonic myth.

But first a question.

Student: Perhaps Socrates is not fair in his conclusion that the political art cannot be taught. In the examples that he gives, in the assembly specialists are called upon in certain areas but in another area anyone could discuss no matter who they are and Socrates says that they aren't reproached, no matter who they are they aren't reproached. Socrates says that evidently the Athenians are under the impression that this sort of knowledge cannot be taught. Is there another conclusion that could be drawn, that this sort of knowledge has been taught to everyone?

Yes, all right, that could be but still then the question would not arise who was your teacher? For example say a man claims to have medical knowledge and then you raise the question, if you have any doubt, show me your diploma. But if it is something which everyone is taught, say like reading and writing, you don't ask for it because you know and the test would be very simple, you would say read this letter here. So. That in itself is possible but let us start from what we are all familiar with. How is it today? Maybe most Senators and Congressmen have studied law but really to be a lawyer and to be a politician are two very different things. So in other words, law is very helpful for making political decisions but that is not the same as making political decisions. Do we not still understand by political decisions, decisions which are not expert decisions, where only expert decisions can help? Take Vietnam or whatever you want. Experts will give you all kinds of things. There are invariably two schools of experts, as you know. And so they don't help you very much. They give you some arguments against your political opponents. But argument never makes a decision. Is it not so? I mean for example there is this thing, what is it called, for infantile paralysis. Expert question. Never political. Controversial, whether you should use it,

but never politically controversial. And other things of the same nature too. Things that there should be a proper defense for and is not politically controversial. I mean there are some extremist, some marginal people who would say no defense for it and it is politically irrelevant. A political question is by definition a controversial question which cannot be settled by experts. That still remains. And at all times there exists the hope that there should be some super-experts, some master art, which would do regarding the political matters what medicine does for the human body, what shoemakers do with shoes, and so on. But it is, to say the least, still an open question whether such an art exists. Take political science today which is in a way the child of the of which Socrates spoke. But he does not claim to be able to solve political questions. The only claim is to tell the political men which of their means are good for their ends. But it explicitly refuses to judge of their ends, as you know. Is it not true? So today we should very easily understand that although from an older point of view, from a pre-1900 point of view this ground cannot be assumed, it was always understood that there is some knowledge, some science, of the true ends of political society. Now of course a question would arise here because of the variety of ends and which end has priority in a given situation is not settled by the general doctrine of ends and their natural order because a lower end may rightly demand first claim in a given situation. We will use again my pride example, the appendectomy, something very low, may be more important in a given situation, more urgent, than the highest human activities. The sheer defense of a country, I mean the mere defense, its internal problems remain unsolved, the sheer defense may be given the overriding consideration, in a given situation.

Student: How would Socrates answer the situation where you have experts disagreeing?

There is a beautiful dialogue on that very subject, the *Laches*. It is not the drug that is under discussion, but a certain form of fighting. And there are two experts. One says it's bad. The other says that it is good. And Socrates says well, we must have recourse to principles. What is the meaning of such a combat training? To make the men better soldiers, better fighters. This belongs to the virtue of courage, manliness. Let's first find out what manliness is. And then they come into trouble there. And so much so that they do not answer the question at all what manliness is and what is more interesting they completely forget the practical question from which they started. But you know that this is a kind of comedy because in practices this is impossible. In practice

a decision must be made either without raising the profoundest question. And you have to adopt this kind of missile or that kind, you have to do something. And it will be done with some tossing of coins, just as we do in private life. Don't we do that? But nevertheless the need, the desire, for such a master science is absolutely reasonable and maybe plausible. Whether it can be fulfilled or to what extent it can be fulfilled is a question. The now prevailing view, to repeat, is that there cannot be such a master science because the question of the ends is not susceptible to rational discussion. That is now the prevailing view. Even if this were untrue, even if there was rational understanding of the ends, and their order, this discussion might be so deep, so complicated, that it would be of no practical political use. This also could be.

Well, I see that the time is almost up. I conclude a few minutes early because I have to go to see somebody. I will make up next time. I think we will begin next time with the myth and if we have time we will discuss the Platonic myth itself.

Plato's Protagoras: A course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science, University of
Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 7 April 19, 1965:

Now let us continue. We were at the point where...now what was the situation? Protagoras had explained or rather stated what his claim is. And the claim is that he can teach the political art or virtue. It was not quite clear. And Socrates had doubted whether virtue is teachable and Protagoras said, "I will answer your question either by a myth or by a logos." And the choice was restored to Protagoras himself and he said, "well I think it is better to explain by a myth." This was the point at 320c8 Now let us read first the beginning.

Student: "Once upon a time there were gods only, and no mortal creatures."

Mortal races, breeds, kinds or whatever.

Student: "But when the destined time came that these also should be created..."

No, should come into being, these too should come into being. Now these too, the mortal races, which means that the gods also had to come into being. I.e. there was a time when there were no gods. Now is this not difficult? Are the gods not immortal? And the time for the coming into being of the mortal races cannot have been appointed by the gods, surely not the time for the coming into being for the gods cannot have been appointed by the gods. That is clear. Yes.

Student: How can something that comes into being remain forever?

That you have to address to the Greek mythologies.

Student: Well Plato raises the question, does he answer it?

He doesn't do it. In a way Protagoras does it. But even Protagoras is not fully responsible for a myth. No begin again.

Student: "But when the time came that these also should come into being, the gods fashioned them out of earth and fire and various mixtures of both elements in the interior of the earth;..."

Yes. Now which gods, we are not told. They work in the interior of the earth. That means without light. And these gods are responsible for what is common to all living beings, all animals. In other words they create what would be called in present day language living matter.

Now if we would compare this sentence of Protagoras with a parallel in the when presents

Plato's cosmology, 31b to 32c we will see that Protagoras permits a bond between fire and the earth. And this bond according to the is proportioned. You remember his rejection of mathematics in his critique of Hippias in 318e. So in other words it is a much more primitive form of cosmology to which Protagoras here alludes.

Now they are formed in the earth, in the interior of the earth. This expression occurs also in the famous noble lie of the Republic, 414d to e. The human beings with their instruments and their education were formed within the earth. But not by the gods, but by the founders of the city. According to this myth of the Republic, there is a single source of the natural, of the arts, and of education. We will see that Protagoras does not assert that. And this source is not divine but the founders of the city. But of course, this noble lie of the Republic is admittedly a lie. Whereas Protagoras doesn't call it explicitly a lie, he says myth. Now go on where we left off.

Student: "and when they were about to bring them into the light of day, they ordered Prometheus and Epimetheus to equip them, and to distribute to them severally their proper qualities. Epimetheus demanded of...

No, he asks him, he bids him. There is a constant change from the past tense to the present tense here which is of some importance. The molding is still taking place. More generally stated, the myth represents as an event of the past what is always going on. This goes throughout the story. Yes go on.

Student: "Epimetheus said to Prometheus: 'Let me distribute and do you inspect.' This was agreed, and Epimetheus made the distribution. There were some to whom he gave strength without swiftness, while he equipped the weaker with swiftness; some he armed, and others he left unarmed;...

To others he gave an unarmed nature.

Student: "and devised for the latter some other means of preservation, making some large, and having their size as a protection, and others small, whose nature was to fly in the air or burrow in the ground; this was to be their way of escape. thus did he compensate them with the view of preventing any race from becoming extinct. And when he had provided against their destruction by one another, he contrived also a means of protecting them against the seasons that come from Zeus; clothing them with close hair and thick skins sufficient to defend them against the winter cold and able to resist the summer heat, so that they might have a natural bed of their own

when they wanted to rest; also he furnished them with hoofs and hair and hard and callous skins under their feet. Then he gave them varieties of food,--herb of the soil to some, to others fruits of trees, and to others roots, and to some again he gave other animals as food. And some he made to have few young ones, while those who were their prey were very prolific; and in this manner the race was preserved.

Yes, let us stop here for a moment. So here is a new stage, they are no longer the gods but the man whose thought comes afterward, the after-thinker in contradistinction to the forethinker. Now the gods are responsible for what we can call loosely living matter, responsible for the distinctive faculties, powers or natures of the various species. He is still working on the ground without light, blindly. Epimetheus attributes, assigns natures. In Greek the word is , which means law. In other words the myth here that uses the natures to an act of . And this is something distinct from the act of the gods, but it is akin to the act of the gods because it is also still done on the ground without light. Now we come to the result of this strange cooperation between the gods, these gods, and Epimetheus. Yes.

Student: "thus did Epimetheus, who, not being very wise, forgot that he had distributed among the brute animals all the qualities which he had to give,-- and when he came to man,..."

Now brute means literally the speechless ones.

Student: "and when he came to man, who was still unprovided, he was terribly perplexed."

Yes, now let us stop here for another moment. What is suggested here is this: nature does not take care of man as well as it does of the other animals. Nature is not very wise. The gods who left the world to be completed, to Epimetheus and Prometheus, are not very wise, because they are indirectly responsible. But we must also not forget that Prometheus himself, the forethinker, is not very wise. Why did he permit his not-very-wise brother to distribute the powers?

Well, his lack of wisdom, Prometheus lack of wisdom, is a very special one--he is kind-hearted. He is easily swayed by the biddings of others. In Aeschylus' drama Prometheus Bound, he is presented in the same way. There is a character who has the same effect on Prometheus as Epimetheus does here. Prometheus is too kind-hearted to be wise. It is not clear however whether Prometheus means to present Prometheus himself as lacking in wisdom. In

other words it is possible that Prometheus' lack of wisdom resembles Protagoras' own lack of wisdom, that Protagoras tries to present Prometheus as a wise man but he is wise in the sense that Protagoras is wise, not very wise as we will see in the sequel.

We can say that the myth as a whole shows that the is not the work of intelligence. Anaxagoras, the first sober man among intoxicated ones, as Aristotle calls it, was the first to say that the universe is a world of intelligence. Protagoras does not hold this view.

Now there is another point. One could, of course, say logos, speech, reason, is man's natural power which would therefore have been given to him by Epimetheus. This one could say, but whether it is meant by Protagoras is another matter. The thesis here suggested is: nature is the stepmother of man. A thesis which we find somewhat later in a member of the cynic school called Bion and in Epicurus somewhat later. And this was a thesis that was taken up by John Locke in modern time, and well, by others. But this only in passing.

Now let us see the next step in the genesis of the world.

Student: "Now, while he was in this perplexity, Prometheus came to inspect the distribution, and he found that the other animals were suitably furnished, but that man alone was naked and shoeless, and had neither bed nor arms of defense. The appointed hour was approaching when man in his turn was to go forth into the light of day;...

Which implies that whatever was done by Prometheus was done underground, as I said before.

Student: "and Prometheus, not knowing how he could devise man's salvation, stole...

Steals, it is also present tense. This is truly an eternal process.

Student: "steals the wisdom of practicing the art of Hephaestus and Athene, and fire with them (they could neither have been acquired nor used without fire), and gave them to man."

Also present tense. I will not say it all the time, I will just warn you. Now the next sentence he turns again to the past tense.

Student: "Thus man had the wisdom necessary to the support of life, but political wisdom he had not; for that was in the keeping of Zeus, and there was no longer any time for Prometheus to enter into the citadel of heaven, where Zeus dwelt, who moreover had terrible sentinels;...

In other words Prometheus was no longer in the good grace of Zeus, for reasons which Protagoras does not state.

Student: "but he did enter by stealth into the common workshop of Athene and Hephaestus, in which they used to practise their favourite arts, and carried off Hephaestus' art of working by fire, and also the art of Athene, and gave them to man. And in this way man was supplied with the means of life. But Prometheus is said to have been afterwards prosecuted for theft, owing to the blunder of Epimetheus."

Let us stop here. So now we have a new stage mythically designated by the figure of Prometheus, the arts in contradistinction to nature. The arts are due not to the unnamed gods who mold men underground nor to the Olympian gods but to Prometheus action against the Olympian gods, and in particular the theft. The expression theft is repeated. The fact of the theft, the crime in the old story by the old poet, Prometheus steals the fire from Zeus. Protagoras wishes to make clear the radical difference between the other arts and the political art of wisdom, the letter Hermes sends from Zeus as we shall see.

This description which is here given of original man in c5 to 6, "shoeless, naked" etc., is exactly the description given to Eros in Plato's Banquet, 203c to d. This is not entirely irrelevant as we will see because if man's nature is eros, in the widest sense of the term, meaning the desire for man's completion, for his perfection, if this is his nature then in a way the arts and the laws belong to his nature which would not be true in Protagoras' scheme.

Now the myth is meant to prove that virtue can be taught. For this purpose it must show what virtue is. Hitherto we have been given only one thing to understand. Virtue is not by nature because what is by nature is the things which we owe to the gods or Epimetheus. Nor, as we learn now, is virtue an art like the other arts for those we got through Prometheus theft. But you see also, although it is clear that man is now to move out from underground into the light of the sun, nothing is said that man actually leaves the underground world. That is left to us to figure out whether that is the case.

Student: I don't understand why in this paragraph it seems to be repeated. First it says that Prometheus steals the arts of Hephaestus and Athene and again later on he says he steals the arts. Do these refer to the same thing?

Well, he changes the order. First he says...no I am sorry in both cases he places Hephaestus first, that is

quite true.

Student: Is he referring to the same act? and place?

Yes, I think so. Which in itself means surely emphasis. But for a crime, man would have been lost. You could not state the thesis of Machiavelli more simply than that. Man is compelled to commit crimes in order to live. That is implied. I mean whether the crime is committed by man, by ordinary men or by one acting on men's behalf, namely Prometheus, doesn't make any difference. Yes?

Student: What is the art of Athene that is referred to?
Is that wisdom?

Well it could be weaving, the woman's art. It could be to some extent war. No, no not war. It cannot be war. Athene is also the goddess of war. But you could understand it as a higher art as distinguished from the more craftsman like art of Hephaestus, fire. Yes?

Student: In what you said about Protagoras describing man in this myth and what was said about Eros in the Banquet, does this mean that in reading a dialogue of Plato in which Socrates is present always as a superior that we always have to check the inferior's explanation against Plato's teaching?

Well, according to the now prevailing view, what I now suggest is plainly absurd because they know by a sort of divine revelation that the Banquet was written much later than the Protagoras. And therefore there was not yet the thought of it here. But on the other hand, who knows what was in Plato's mind, assuming that we knew the dates. We surely knew when he wrote the Symposium, the Banquet, where many of the same characters occur. Remember? He knew what he had written in the Protagoras and he could have made retroactively slight changes in the Protagoras to maybe the Banquet. We simply have to start from the assumption that Plato was as conscious in writing and deliberate as possible.

Student: So we have to check Protagoras' teaching against Plato's words as well as with Socrates' words.

Yes, except...sure, to begin with, if we are quite strict we can of course never ascribe Socrates' teaching let alone Protagoras' teaching to Socrates. I expressed it somewhere in an extreme way, but I hope a helpful way, by saying that if someone would say that Macbeth is saying "Life is a tale told by an idiot full..." If someone should say that that is Shakespeare's opinion, everyone would laugh at him. But if he would quote something nice and

pleasant from a Shakespearean character, he would say yes, that's Shakespeare. Now this is of course a childish principle to say that the nice things are the author's view and the bad things are the view of the scoundrels like Macbeth.

Now to begin with we must apply that to Plato as well. And especially since he knows so much that Socrates has been an ironical man. Therefore if he says something very nice, he might not have meant it. And if he says something very unnice, he might not have meant it. So we have to use our heads all the time, which is bad, I admit that but it also has its advantages. It keeps us on our toes. Yes?

Student: But Socrates is Plato's mask...

Yes, but how do we know? that it is Plato's mask?

Student: Because Plato created it. Just as he created Protagoras...

Yes, all right, then they all are Plato's mask, even the scoundrels.

Student: O.K., then you have to look at it in terms of dramatic organization, not in terms of superman versus the nobodies.

But, but we have to see...the point is this: we are saying he is a hero, he is superior to others. We could rightly say that it doesn't interest us if we say so. We could be wrong. But if Socrates proves to be superior. For example, I thought Protagoras was an outstanding man, you must never forget that, and the greatest names of today would barely be comparable to Protagoras in his time. A very outstanding personality. But if Socrates, who proves to be before our eyes to be able to confuse, to "lick" Protagoras, then we see with our own eyes that this Platonic character called Socrates is superior to the other Platonic character called Protagoras. Plato never says that Socrates is superior to Protagoras, at least not in the dialogue. But if we see it, I mean it must not be unreasonable.

I mean, if I see that you have a long reddish beard, if someone comes and tells me all kinds of things about deceptions of the senses, it would not make me run about doubting that you have a long red beard.

Student: But Socrates involves himself in a good deal of illogic, he is accused constantly and quite justly of pushing people around and manipulating them in the verbal art of his...

Yes, but, yes, well, all right but if these other people claim to be the best sophists in the world and

Socrates outsophists them then they are licked. That doesn't mean that it is nice to be a sophist, God forbid! Only that Socrates could in a pinch take care of him. And this could have some advantage because then we would say well, if we have to go in for sophistry at all, we prefer Socrates. And then we look to see if he has something which is better than sophistry. Huh?

Student: O.K.

We must be very flexible. Yes?

Student: May I defend Plato's irony briefly? Noting that the level of argument seems to be below the level on which we believe to move but this is in the proper tradition of comedy in the ancient world where serious situations are represented by absurd easily penetrated exaggerations.

Yes, sure but still even here the point is this that the Platonic dialogues are not in this simple sense comedy. And therefore this is not immediately of any help to us. But on the contrary I would say in the case of the comedies, we are too much inclined not to take them seriously enough. And simply say, well, these are slapstick scenes which are very amusing and maybe they are more than slapstick. In a tragedy you would take them more seriously because death and guilt and all other such things are involved and then we are much more respectful then we would be in the case of comedy with all kinds of these disgraceful things which happen in comedy.

Now where were we, where did we wander off? That was not meant as a criticism of the question but we have to return to our text now. We begin now in the last stage.

Student: "Now man, having a share of divinity..."

No, "having acquired a share in the divine fortune, divine fate." Meaning through Prometheus' theft.

Student: "Now man, having acquired a share in divine fortune, was at first the only one of the animals who had any gods..."

Literally, "who believed in gods" or "came to hold gods" by virtue of his kinship with the god, in the singular. Yes?

Student: "because he was of the kindred of the god. And he would raise altars..."

He would try, he would attempt.

Student: "And he would attempt to raise altars and images of them..."

Of gods, yes?

Student: "raise altars and images of gods. He was not long in inventing articulate speech and names; and he also constructed houses and clothes and shoes and beds, and drew sustenance from the earth."

Now let us stop here. Now through Prometheus' crime, man came to share in divine fortune, meaning the fortune I take it belonging to Hephaestus and Athene, having these arts. But before that, he alone of all animals had already kinship with the god, with which god? and on the basis of what did he have the kinship? I would suggest without being able to prove it, he had this kinship on the basis of his logos, of his reasoning. Protagoras indirectly reminds us of the absence from his story of an intelligent maker of the universe. Now he smuggles that intelligent author in here.

The rational animal man believes in a rational god and is qua rational kindred. You see that worship of the gods precedes speech, but not quite. Therefore he says he "tried" to set up altars, he couldn't do it properly because he lacked speech and reason. Now piety we see then comes in as a virtue here, is the first virtue proper we can say. And it is a pre-political virtue. But it presupposes arts. Fundamentally because according to this view the gods are by virtue of the art. See Laws 889e3, also the beginning of the simile of the cave in the Republic. But let us go on. Yes?

Student: Are you suggesting that man had an original kinship with god based on his speech or was his speech based on...

Well, the fact that he uses here the god as the singular means that he cannot let man see subterraneously working gods who molded man nor can he refer directly to the Olympian gods. At least there is no link, no explicit link between them. Why not such a rational course such as Anaxagoras' Intelligence?

Student: Because before the theft of Prometheus which came in the arts of Hephaestus and Athene he didn't have speech either and so it would seem that he had no divine component until the theft.

Yes but is there not something underlying speech and the arts, the condition for the fact that man can acquire arts and can acquire speech. Could this not be? After all,

the fact of man's natural nakedness in the radical sense in which Protagoras means it, is this not at the same time an emptiness, a hole there, which is the place for reason? In this sense man is potentially rational from the very beginning even according to that scheme. Yes?

Student: Well one gets the impression from the beginning of the myth though that all of these creatures were created as sort of blanks and then given various powers. Man's power just happened to be quite accidentally these arts.

- No. They are distinguished. The arts are distinguished. They are a gift of Prometheus and they are distinguished from what they got before. And the others have definite natural powers. Men's powers are all in a sense acquired. But there must be something by virtue of which man can acquire them, this potentiality must be there which the others don't have. Man cannot be simply naked or this nakedness is a very peculiar nakedness, it is rich in potentiality.

Student: Well. It seems the only difficulty would be that this assumes that before any of the qualities or any of the natures were given to the animals, by Epimetheus, there was in the beginning, in the first creation of living matter by the unnamed gods there was a distinction between man and the animals...

Yes, sure it was because let us say that animals are living matter plus let us say instincts. And then there was a piece of living matter without instinct and that is man. But the mere fact of the absence of instincts is a negative thing is also something positive because it is the basis for the emergence of reason taking the place of instinct. Naturally we have to speculate a bit here because of the extreme brevity of Protagoras' statement. And he is not particularly concerned with that because he is concerned with making a distinction between nature, art, and something else to which he is turning now.

Student: Well, the basis of the very distinction though ...it would seem that everything that is rational about man simply came from these arts and wasn't part of nature in the first place.

Yes, but that he was receptive to the arts in a way in which say an elephant would not be receptive or anything else...

Student: But you don't mean that if Epimetheus had forgotten the elephants...

I only ask you what is the kinship of man with the god and who is that god? This question must be answered. I do not say that I have solved it but show me another solution.

Student: Well, simply that he had the arts...

No, he had spoken that he had acquired a divine fortune and that is what happened through Prometheus but what was his kinship? That is not necessarily identical with having acquired the divine fortune. You would have to give a better answer than that.

Student: Is it fair to say on the basis of this discussion that the origin of this logos is not covered in Protagoras'...

No, no, yes you can say logos is divided into the arts on the one hand, language on the other, and something like law in the third place. Yes? But it is implied as a unity only in what we find in man as he came from the hands of Epimetheus.

Student: But since Epimetheus did not give man anything it must mean that that receptivity came from the gods...

No, no the gods gave nothing. They produced only the indifferent living matter of all beings. But myths after all can never be one hundred per cent correct. But there can be a kind of according to which the absence of any rational faculties, this nakedness, means there is a whole. But being a hole it can be filled and it calls, as it were, for being filled.

Student: The other animals were clothed all over.

Yes, sure, you are quite correct to remind me of it. That was the reason why it occurred to me that man might be understood here after all as a rational being. And if man is a rational being, the sole rational animal, then of course his kinship with the god would consist in the fact that this singular god is the intelligence. Yes, good. Thank you very much. Now let us go on.

Student: "Thus provided, mankind at first lived dispersed, and there were no cities. But the consequence was that they were destroyed by the wild beasts, for they were utterly weak in comparison with them, and their art was only sufficient to provide them with the means of life, and did not enable them..."

Literally, the craftsmanly arts. In other words the arts which they got through Prometheus, the craftsman's arts we can say.

Student: "the craftsmanly arts were only sufficient to provide them with the means of life, and did not enable them to carry on war against the animals: food they had, but not as yet the political art, of which the art of war is a part."

You see they couldn't wage war because they didn't have the art of war, and they didn't have the art of war because the art of war is part of the political art and they did not yet have the political art living in isolation and not yet together. Yes?

Student: "After a while the desire for collective living and of self-preservation made them found cities; but when they were gathered together, having not the political art, they dealt with one another unjustly, and were again in the process of dispersion and destruction. "

Stop. So man got the craftsmanly arts through Prometheus, but not the political art, that is essentially different from the other arts. And they could not live together, hence they could not live. Because man is so built that he can only live thus. Man's beginnings are, we see, very imperfect according to Protagoras. You remember perhaps Protagoras' critique of the wisdom of the ancients. You know he is superior to Homer and the others as we have seen before. The whole notion of progress is here in the background. So, man needs the political art, and he didn't get it from nature nor Prometheus. How did he get it? Let us see.

Student: "Zeus feared that our entire race would be exterminated..."

You see Zeus enters here only very late, after the gods underground and Epimetheus had done their works. And now he is trying to save the situation. Yes?

Student: "and so he sent Hermes to them, bearing reverence and justice to be the ordering principles of cities and the uniting bonds of friendship..."

Yes, now Hermes, the god of the thieves of course who reminds us of Prometheus' theft, enters at the same time--remember also that Alcibiades was Hermes-like in this dialogue--but he is also the god, emphatically, of Athenian democracy, he is to bring the sense of shame and right. Here already now the political art is a divine gift from

Zeus himself, it is not stolen. There is no connection here between Zeus here and that god to whomever our kin, of whom you read before. Yes?

Student: Why do they have this collective desire?

Well, the wild animals threaten them and they have to be confronted with a tiger. They think maybe if we unite we have a greater chance of survival. I think that is the most obvious explanation here. And then they couldn't do it because they had to have the capacity of getting along together, which they lacked. They were not yet socialized in the sense of present day political sociology. That had to be done by Zeus. Yes?

Student: It must be a truism that man is a social animal.

Well, you take it very easy. This truth was denied or surely by such people as Hobbes and Rousseau and so on.

Student: But they didn't live in Athens.

Yes, but do you believe that these matters depend on climate and...here he clearly says, Protagoras says, that man is not by nature a social animal and not even through the intervention of the arts does he become social. This is something very special. I mean by the way the other statements by people like Glaucon in the second book of the Republic and the characters in the Gorgias also imply that man is not by nature social. Man's sociality is due to convention. That was a view ordinarily ascribed to the Sophists...

Student: But the question is, it says at least in the English "the desire of collective living and of self-preservation"

Now let me see, they thought to come together, to assemble themselves and to save themselves by founding cities. But the reason is clear, I mean on entering society, for very powerful motives. This is something radically different from fundamental sociality. In other words that society is within us whether we have good or bad motives for living in society or for living in isolation, in solitude, means man is under all conditions a social animal, whether he lives in solitude or in Times Square at twelve noon.

Student: Is this to be taken then that the desire is given to man as a part of his rational nature?

No, the desire is a thought, thought is more literal. This seeking is a consequence of the threat by wild animals

Student: But it is different from the animals who feel no such threat.

Well, that depends. Some of them do live gregariously as you know, bees, and ants, and quite a few bird races are by nature social.

Student: As far as we can tell, they did so from the beginning, they are made that way...

The point is that man was not made that way. In the case of man it was necessary to invent society, to found cities. That is the point. Good. Now where were we now?

Student: 322c, about 4, Hermes asks Zeus.

Yes, good. Now let us go on from here.

Student: "Hermes asked Zeus how he should impart justice and reverence among men:...

You can also translate it "sense of shame," which I believe is better.

Student: "justice and a sense of shame among men:--Should I distribute them as the arts are distributed; that is to say, to a few only,..."

No, no. "as the arts are distributed. They are distributed in the following manner."

Student: "And they are distributed in this manner; one specialist in medicine or of any other art sufficient for many laymen? 'Shall this be the manner in which I am to distribute justice and the sense of shame among men, or shall I give them to all?'"

Now let's wait. In other words it might be sufficient to have five or six experts in justice around and the others are all unjust and they would take care of the others. You see that Hermes implies that Zeus has no idea of how the arts are distributed and therefore he explains it to him. Yes?

Student: "To all, said Zeus; 'I should like them all to..."

Yes, well but you have not tried to imitate the jovial, Olympian character in which Zeus tries to thunder from on high. I don't blame you for that but you must think of that. It must have a terrific effect when he says "All, and all should participate!"

Student: "To all, said Zeus, 'I should like them all to have a share; for cities cannot exist, if a few only share in justice and a sense of shame as in the arts...

"As in the case of the other arts." In other words, only a few have to be tailors and shoemakers and things like that but all must be decent.

Student: "And further, make a law by my order, that he who has no part in a sense of shame and justice shall be put to death, for he is a plague of the City."

And this is the reason, Socrates, why the Athenians and mankind in general, when the question relates to the excellence of carpentry or any other mechanical art,...

"any other of the craftsmanly art", as I tried to indicate.

Student: "allow but a few to share in their deliberations; and when any one else interferes, then, as you say, they object, if he be not of the few; which, as I reply, is very natural. But when they meet to deliberate about political excellence and virtue, which proceeds only by way of justice and self-control, they are patient enough of any man who speaks of them, as is also natural, because they think that every man ought to share in this sort of virtue, and that Cities could not exist if this were otherwise. I have explained to you, Socrates, the reason of this phenomenon."

Now let us stop here. You see that he comes toward the end of the myth, twice he has addressed Socrates and has fallen out of the solemn style of mythical delivery. And natural is of course used in the loose sense, not the Greek, ~~in the~~ Greek it is "matter of course." Now you see that Protagoras has vindicated the Athenian practice as reasonable. But he does not say as Socrates did that the Athenians are particularly wise in having that practice. He says all men do that. So he is not very , he would have had the simple opportunity of paying a compliment to his guests.

And he, and that is the keypoint, in contradistinction to Socrates gives the cause of the Athenian practice. Now what is the cause, what is the cause why Athenians and in fact all men demand from everyman that he be just and have a sense of shame? What's the cause of that?

Student: If he doesn't, the city falls apart.

Yes, in one sense. But more literally.

Student: It is a law.

Yes, it is a law. Generally speaking, this is due to law.

Will you excuse me for one moment. I do not feel right.

Plato's Protagoras: A course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science, the University
of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 8, April 21, 1965:

Let us turn to the Protagoras. Let us remind ourselves only of the context. Protagoras claims to teach well-advisedness regarding domestic and political matters. Socrates calls it the political art. But Socrates doubts that it can be taught. Protagoras chooses of his own free will to prove his contention that it can be taught by a myth.

The myth has externally four stages. First the gods beneath the earth produce something which we called living matter with a highly appropriate but colloquial and ~~intelligible~~ intelligible expression. Second, Epimetheus, working also beneath the earth which means without light or blinded, supplies that matter with specific faculties or natures. I.e. he makes the various races of animals, but in such a way that man remains unsupplied with such natural powers. The indication is that nature is a step-mother to man. Or generalized, nature is bad. Art remedies the defects of nature. There are allusions to this sort, which is of course very common to us in modern times, conquest of nature, nature the enemy; but there are some traces of that in classical thought. I referred on a former occasion to a remark in the first book of the Republic. Now the third stage, Prometheus steals the arts from Hephaestus and Athene. He steals them. The Olympian gods of whom these two gods belong are as unkind or malicious as the subterranean gods to say nothing of Epimetheus. But the fourth stage, even after having acquired the arts, men are still unable to live since they are unable to live together. They lack the political art which is identified here by Prometheus with sense of shame and sense of right. This is not stolen from any god because it would be absurd to present the sense of right as due to a crime, but a gift of Zeus. Now the implication here is clear. There is as fundamental a difference between nature and art as is the difference between art and morality, to use a convenient modern term. What the Greeks would call the noble and the just things. This much we have read last time. I have to ask you to re-read the last passage where I interrupted in 322d5.

And that is important. Now for the first time he addresses Socrates. It is of course not proper to the style of the myth that you should use the name of a contemporary man. I mean a myth belongs to the olden days and Socrates lives now in 431 or so, 432. So?

Student: "And this is the reason, Socrates, why the Athenians and mankind in general, when the question relates to excellence in carpentering or any other craftsmanly art, allow but a few to share in their deliberations; and when any one else interferes, then, as you say, they object, if he be not of the favoured few;..."

No, "if anyone outside of these few," the few experts. In every such question there is a small minority which is capable of giving advice. Yes?

Student: "which, as I reply, is very natural. But when they meet to deliberate about political excellence or virtue, which proceeds only by way of justice and self-control, they are patient enough of any man who speaks of them, as is also a matter of course, because they think that every man ought to share in this sort of virtue, and that Cities could not exist if this were otherwise. I have explained to you, Socrates, the reason of this phenomenon."

Literally, "the cause." This is the cause of that. He again addresses Socrates directly. Now Protagoras vindicates the Athenian practice as reasonable but he does not say, as Socrates did, that the Athenians are particularly wise. Protagoras does not make any compliments to the Athenians, he is not prudent. He says that this practice is common to all men. And he, ~~in contrast~~ ^{in distinction} to Socrates who simply stated the brute fact, Protagoras gives the cause or reasons for the practice. And the reason as we have already seen last time in the first place Zeus' law, everyone should partake in it. But ultimately, as was also said in the discussion last time, behind that law of Zeus was a necessity. There couldn't be human survival without cities, there couldn't be cities without political virtue.

Zeus replaces...no, Socrates replaces I think...no, I am sorry. Protagoras replaces what Zeus had called the sense of shame by moderation. There is a certain kinship between the two as you can easily see. If you want to go deeper into that you must study the first two books of Plato's Laws where this connection is explained. And he replaces sense of right which also has the meaning of punishment, for example in 322a2 he speaks of the punishment which Prometheus received for his theft. He replaces this by the ordinary word for justice. In connection with this he mentions no punishment except annihilation, those who cannot partake of the political virtue must be annihilated. Those who are unable, the same term occurs at the beginning of Aristotle's Politics when he speaks of the men who are unable to live in the polis 1253a25 and following.

But most important here is the simple identification of the political art with political virtue. Which to begin with is absolutely strange. To demand from every citizen high-class statesmanship is just plain nonsense. But from everyone one can expect that he has the simple citizen virtues. But here the political art is to be as much demanded

of all men. We can only later on find out what this means.

He speaks also here of the craftsmanly virtue, not of the craftsmanly art. Here too virtue and knowledge are identical. And this is now not by Socrates but by Protagoras. So the identification of knowledge and virtue for which Socrates is famous is here attributed to Protagoras. A similar case, though not so clear, occurs in the Gorgias, 460b, where Gorgias accepts without any further ado the assertion of Socrates that he who knows the just things does the just things. That's the same. This is of course not an unfair attribution to these sophists or rhetorician by Socrates. It is implied in Protagoras's claim. Hippias will become better and better by virtue of Protagoras' teaching. That means just by listening to Protagoras, by learning, by acquiring knowledge, we become better. He will learn well-advisedness or what Socrates calls the political art.

Virtue is a piece of learning, something that can be brought about by speeches, in particular by persuasive speeches. In other words the political art is identical with rhetoric, which is described as the thesis of the sophists by Aristotle toward the end of the Ethics. I have dealt with this and I deliberately do not want to bring it up now but for those who are interested in the City and Man on page 23. If you read this page once or twice you will see how crucial this issue is. So the conclusion which I drew there is this, no which I did not draw there--Socrates in contradistinction to the sophists seems to agree with that, that virtue is knowledge, but according to Socrates it is not rhetoric but dialectics which is, or is productive of virtue. And therefore we would have to know much more than we do now--how dialectics can make a man good.

But let us return to the context. The myth was to dispose of the conflict between Protagoras' claim, the famous foreigner, and the view of the Athenians. The Athenians have of course no objection to men acquiring virtue, especially in the sense of justice and moderation through teachers or any other men, but they do object to a tiny minority among them acquiring the political art of statesmanship. That is to say, the Athenians do make a distinction between the political art and the political virtue, the virtue by which the city stands and falls or to use a later term they do make a distinction between the political art and moral virtue of which justice and moderation are key parts. Protagoras abolishes this distinction. The political art is identical with justice and moderation. Perhaps even more important is this that according to the myth the political art in the sense of justice and moderation is a gift of Zeus. What does this imply, if it is a gift of Zeus?

Student: It is very good!

Well, everyone in a sense would admit that justice and moderation are good. But there is another indication. If it is a gift of Zeus...

Student: Then it doesn't have to be taught.

Yes!! It doesn't have to be taught! And this leaves our good Protagoras on a limb. The myth is inept. But why did he tell a myth? Because he wanted to tell a myth. His choice was inept. He lacks that quality of well-advisedness which he claims to teach. We have to return to this point later when we are through, when we have considered the sequel. Yes?

Student: Still couldn't he claim that the high priests or a man who has served the gods better than the others...

But if it is a gift of Zeus, if everyone coming to him has it already, what can he do?

I believe the sequel confirms this interpretation but I would like first to make here a few remarks which I think are interesting about the myth in Plato in general because that is a very broad topic and we must be mindful.

Now originally the terms mythos and logos had the same meaning, a speech. But the distinction and even the opposition between them is later. And according to this more recent usage, a myth is an untrue story. For example in the Republic, 377a, or in the Phaedo Socrates says, Poets must make myths but not logos and the poets are by definition liars, makers of things that are not the truth. The question is of course why does Plato use myth or in other words what is a Platonic myth? which is not the same from any other myth? Now to answer this question of course the only decent way to proceed is to go through the writings of Plato with a pencil in one's hand and see, here that's a myth and here that's a myth. And one should perhaps say to begin with for someone who wants to be very conscientious that only the statements which are called mythical by Plato or his spokesmen--here we are already on treacherous ground--are to be counted as mythical.

If we apply this standard we would arrive at the conclusion that the myth at the end of the Gorgias is not a myth because Socrates explicitly says that you will, Callicles will think it is a myth but it is a logos in fact. The presentation of the best regime in the Republic is explicitly called a myth. You see how far this would lead us. Let us not therefore be too strict or pedantic or in a way to unpedantic because we must not identify the spokesman with Plato without caution.

Let me say that the myth is an account which lacks

evidence and which nevertheless claims to make manifest what is. Myth will therefore deal with things regarding which knowledge is impossible or at least very difficult to obtain. Now what are those things? For example the things of the most ancient antiquity they are always unknowable even today you come back where you have only bones and no tools. And what was going on in this very interesting stage where there were no tools this of course is wholly unknowable, we can never know. So the very old things; for example in the Laws, in the Statesman, things of very old times are told explicitly in myth.

But there are other things that are unknowable. The interior of heaven for example. Well, we know much more today than Plato did, but even today no one has been there. Even on the moon, to say nothing of other planetary systems. And also the interior of the earth was at that time regarded as unknowable. Therefore cosmology, an account of heaven and earth tend to come in myth as in the Phaedo and the Tenth Book of the Republic. To some extent Plato's own great cosmological work the Timaeus is a myth, it is explicitly called a plausible myth. So it is distinguished from the other ones which are not plausible but it is still a myth.

But above all, of these things which are not easy of access, is the soul and especially its fate prior to birth and after death. The myth in the Apology, the Gorgias, the Phaedo, the Republic, and the Phaedrus deal with these things. On the other hand as a curiosity the account of the ancestry of Eros is not called by her a myth. In the present-day discussions this account but she does not call it a myth. Why? That is a long question.

Now. Myths however need not be necessary because the truth cannot be strictly speaking known. Myths may also be unnecessary because the truth cannot be said. That is a possibility.

Now let us cast a glance at the myth told by Socrates to simplify matters. In the Gorgias Socrates introduces this what everyone calls a myth except Socrates that he has heard an account and on the basis of what he has heard he figured out certain things, he drew certain inferences from what he has heard. This is probably the reason why he says it is not a myth but a logos because on the basis of this account he has figured out.

In the Apology of Socrates, Socrates tells a myth on the basis of what people say. This applies also to the myth in the Phaedo.

In the Tenth Book of the Republic, the myth is told by Socrates but ascribed by him to Er. So it is in a way not Socrates' story.

In the Critias the story is told by old Egyptian priests,

in the Phaedrus it is ascribed to the poet .
Now we get one understanding of the Protagoras. You see the point in this? We must just as in military strategy as it has been said hit them where they ain't. It is in our kind of strategy also necessary to see what isn't, what ain't there, i.e. what is not said. But if you compare the Protagoras myth with the others you see immediately that Protagoras does not refer to anything said to him, to any tradition he does not even claim to be based on tradition. It is a mere invention. There is only one slight exception in 322a when he speaks of the punishment of Prometheus he says, "as is said," but this is of course not a very important part of the story. On the contrary this singular reference to what is said brings out the silence on what is said in all other matters.

There is a parallel to this, another story by Prodicus in Xenophon's Memorabilia Book II, Chapter 1. The famous fable of at the parting of the ways. Should he take the way of virtue or vice? Also no reference to any tradition. The open invention of the myth seems to be characteristic of these men as distinguished from Socrates.

Another characteristic of the Protagoras myth is this if you would compare it with the other myths would see that the other myths are always preceded by a logos, by a reasoned argument. Here Protagoras begins with a myth, without any preparation. And lastly but above all it is extremely simple to translate Protagoras' myth as a whole into nonmythical language. I believe I gave you a specimen of that. One can say that it is as little mysterious as Voltaire's Candide, if you ever read it. Candide also has its mysteries but they are not very difficult to find. We have some information, some historical information, this fellow who said...what was his name?...ah, the wise man....

Student: Kant.

No, Kant was not wise. Kant was the German metaphysician and that by definition was unwise. No this other fellow who slaved all his life for the booksellers in Amsterdam.

So you have to have some minor outside information. I will then say that a Socratic myth in contradistinction to the Protagorean myth is an account which one tells first of all to children, which only children will accept as literally true, which is not simply an invention or innovation but already being believed in or which has come down from a named or an unnamed source. An account which in other words is not literally true and supported by a tradition which is more or less shaky but it is supported by tradition. The question then arises what then is the myth's solid support if it is not literally true and the tradition is rather dubious? I will give here only one

provisional answer. Let us consider another kind of untrue account occurring in Plato which is not called a myth and which no one ever called a myth as far as I know. And this is a description of democracy in the Eighth Book of the Republic. This is an extremist attack on democracy which manifestly runs counter to facts known both to Socrates and Plato. I mention only one point. In democracy no one will ever be punished people who have been condemned to death walk around and nothing happens to them. Well, Plato knew the case of Socrates. And Socrates knew some other cases, the many political cases where the people were of course put to death without any . Now this description of this atrociously untrue description corresponds however to Adeimantus' dream. Adeimantus is a man to whom Socrates talks when he describes some of these things, 563b of the Republic.

Now for some reason Socrates thinks it opportune in this situation to play up to Adeimantus' very strong antidemocratic prejudices and he tests him by saying he accepts this, swallows this hook, line, and sinker. Now if we generalize from that we could say Platonic myths are to some extent at any rate dreams in which a soul reveals itself, a mirror of a soul, the desire or eros of a soul. And then Socratic myth would be a story by which Socrates reveals to his addressee the innermost longings of the addressee or perhaps of Socrates himself.

Perhaps the myth in the Phaedrus which is distinguished from all other myths by the fact that it is the only myth in which Socrates speaks of a super-heavenly place. All the other myths deal with earthly, subterranean, or heavenly things, but not super-heavenly. Perhaps the myth in the Phaedrus is the one in which Socrates reveals his innermost longing to Phaedrus, his longing for unqualified beauty free from everything ugly or bad.

And the myth at the end of the Gorgias I would say, is meant to cure Callicles, in a way to hold to him a mirror of his soul. But of course in this case Socrates proves to be wholly ineffective. Now this is what I wanted to say about the myths, to keep this in mind and perhaps it will prove to be helpful to you when you come across another myth. Yes?

Student: About that myth that failed, does it hold a mirror to Callicles of his soul as it is or as Socrates feels it could and should be?

Or as he should view it perhaps? As Callicles should view the future of his soul, in hell and not where he is completely naked and where there are no longer any trimmings there, badges or any other things derived from wealth or honor and where he is looked at, or judged by judges who

cannot be fooled. Whereas if he is accused before an Athenian jury, if he has a very clever defender or perhaps if he himself has acquired the art of forensic rhetoric, then he can of course fool the judges easily. But if he is confronted by unfoolable judges and in addition if there is no way that he can appear as this marvelous striking man but as simply naked, completely naked then he will see the truth. Good.

Student: Your account of a myth, that is that it is something that is not literally true. What is the connection between your account and the fact that myths told by Socrates usually have some basis...

Yes, but Protagoras doesn't refer...well, he makes some tacit use of stories about Prometheus. But he doesn't deem it anyway necessary to have support by authority.

Student: Well, what significance do you attach to the fact that Socrates does feel the need to appeal to them.

Well, Socrates is more modest. He doesn't have the nerve. And you see it fits of course perfectly with or rather into Protagoras' contempt for antiquity, of which we have seen some traces.

Student: Well, could it have something to do with the fact that Socrates recognizes that to be convincing a myth has to seem to be something that is eternally true and holds whereas Protagoras doesn't realize what is important in terms of convincing somebody.

Yes, but how come? Because he is sure that he can charm everybody and people will not ask for any proof if he has said so and is dutifully praised. Now let us continue at this point.

Student: "And that you may not suppose yourself to be deceived..."

Now let us stop here. He refers here to the danger of deception by what? By myth of course. The mythical ground or cause which he has given does not give a guarantee that it has an effect which is real as we say, which is being as it were. The myth is an account of the origins as we have seen. Where does virtue come from, where do the arts come from, and so on. Well think from the Bible of the explanation of the peculiar relation of the two sexes by the story of Eve from Adam's rib. The fact which we know is that there is a certain relation between the two

sexes. They need each other, they cling to each other, and there is a certain inferiority of the female sex. I am not stating my own opinion. And a way of expressing it is that Eve came after Adam. But a myth may also be an account of things which are not. For example there may be a myth about the origins of centaurs. The centaurs are not therefore the origins of the centaurs are not. Yes? Surely the visible effects are better known than the mythical causes. But apart from this essential effect of myth as myth this particular myth has its special effect that it renders impossible Protagoras' art, as we have seen. If the political art equals the political virtue as a gift of Zeus why do we need human teachers? So, as I said, Protagoras' choice of the myth was a bad choice and therefore he must now not leave it at the myth but supplement the myth, which he does quite cleverly but this cleverness must not conceal from us the fact that it is only a remedy. Now begin the sentence again and read it.

Student: "And that you may not suppose yourself to be deceived in thinking that all men regard every man as having a share of justice or honesty and of every other political virtue, let me give you a further proof, which is this."

What is the point? What is a fact? All human beings believe that every must partake of justice and the other political virtues. Protagoras does not say that in fact every is just or must be just etc. still less that all human beings, women, slaves, etc. must be just. So it is very little what he demands here, men believe and they may be absolutely mistaken of course but the fact that they believe that is now established by Protagoras on nonmythical grounds, because a myth somehow doesn't fill the bill.

Student: "In other cases, as you are aware,...

No, "in the case of the other virtues, as you say."

Student: "In the case of the other arts, as you say, if a man says that he is a good flute-player, or skillful in any other art in which he has no skill, people either laugh at him or are angry with him, and his relations think that he is mad and go and admonish him;"

You see how he uses here virtue and technae, now synonymously. That's not Socrates, that's Protagoras.

Student: "but when justice is in question or some other political virtue, even if they know that he is

unjust, yet, if the man comes forward publicly and tells the truth about his injustice, then, what in the other case was held by them to be good sense, i.e. to tell the truth...

Let us keep the term moderation.

Student: "to be moderation, that is to tell the truth, they now deem to be madness. They say that all men ought to profess justice whether they are just or not,..."

"All men ought to profess that they are just," I mean professing justice is just to general a translation. Quite a few people profess justice without claiming they are just.

Student: "and that a man is out of his mind who says anything else."

Who does not raise this claim to justice. Yes.

Student: "Their notion is, that a man must have some degree of justice; and that if he has none at all he ought not to be in human society."

In other words, it is necessary that everyone should participate in justice in whichever way. Now which is the case here stated? Now how does this man participate in justice?

Student: By claiming to be just.

In other words, . Now you see here moderation as the opposition to insanity or madness. Now while it is moderate not to claim or possess an art other than the political art which one does not possess, it is moderate, sensible, to claim or pretend to possess justice even if one does not possess it. So much do men believe that everyone who wishes to live among men must somehow participate in justice. The appearance of justice, nay the pretense to justice, is perfectly sufficient, fills the bill. The alleged gift of Zeus is in fact a mere pretense. Zeus has given men the possibility to claim that they are just, to pretend they are just, and some are of course also just, so justice is radically by convention. It has nothing natural in it.

Student: Isn't there a point here in because all men believe all men participate in justice, a man who does not even make a claim that he is just is by definition not a man.

No, what he literally says is, I am an unjust man, and he may do this from a sense of repentance for example. But in most cases I believe that if someone would say, even today, I have committed a crime and I have to do that, in most cases his relatives would say don't do that, make up for it in any other way, maybe by sending the damaged family a check or something, but don't do that, you will compromise, think of your children! But the key point here is that the gift of Zeus is a mere varnish.

By the way Protagoras, we know this from another Platonic dialogue where Protagoras said the just, the highest, the noblest things are all by convention. It is specifically there in the Theaetetus, 167c, 172a to b, and 177c.

And of course a further consequence of this is that since this is sufficient is that men do not believe that all men are or must be just. They believe only that a man who doesn't claim to be just is mad. Regarding one's justice it is just to be unjust, one can say, namely to lie.

There was a question?

Student: Well isn't it possible that Zeus gave to some men the ability to partake in justice by claiming to be just only and also to other men, most men the ability to be just actually?

Yes, but when you look back at 322d what Zeus said to Hermes you will see that Zeus said in very unequivocal language give it to all and all must participate in it. And he doesn't make this nice distinction.

Student: But isn't it possible for him to give it to all but in different ways?

No. That is a radical correction of the myth.

Student: The discussion seems to have shifted in this part to justice and maybe the fact is that everyone has the sense of shame and you see Zeus gave two things...

Yes, that is very good. In other words the sense of shame can be identified with hypocrisy, that is a noble...it is a good point. Now let us go on. By the way, will it be recorded that he made that point? Good. Continue.

Student: "I have been showing that they are right in admitting every man as a counsellor about this sort of virtue, as they are of opinion that every man is a partaker of it."

Because they believe, yes? Not that it is factually

the case. They believe everyone must partake of it.

Student: "And I will now endeavour to show further that they do not conceive this virtue to be given by nature, or to grow spontaneously, but to be a thing which may be taught; and which comes to a man by taking pains. No one would instruct, no one would rebuke, or be angry with those whose calamities they suppose to be...

No, let us stop here. Now the participation in justice and the other political virtue is due not to nature, of course., nor to divine gift, that is also clear by now, but to human agency. To which human agency? to teaching. That we will see, we will develop in the sequel. Because he must of course say that men acquire it by teaching otherwise he loses the basis of his claim, professional claim.

Student: "No one would instruct, no one would rebuke, or be angry with those whose calamities they suppose to be due to nature or chance; they do not try to punish or to prevent them from being what they are; they do but pity them. Who is so foolish as to chastise or instruct the ugly, or the diminutive, or the feeble? And for this reason. Because he knows that good and evil of this kind is the work of nature and of chance; whereas if a man is wanting in those good qualities which are attained by study and exercise and teaching;"

Now let us stop here. How did we call these qualities? What was the common name? in this translation. Like the ones for being beautiful and tall and strong, how did we call them? Well, anyway in Greek he calls them the beautiful or the noble things and their opposites. Well, no one is indignant about another man's bodily defects. They can annoy him but he can as a sensible man not blame him.

The noble or beautiful things, that is important, are by nature or by chance and this implies justice does not belong to the noble things but to what? Here the distinction has to be considered which is crucial for example in Plato's Republic but also elsewhere between the noble, or fine, or beautiful and the necessary. Justice may be necessary without being beautiful. The clearest case of the non-coincidence of the just and the beautiful is the case of punishment. It is beautiful, noble, fine, praiseworthy, if we act justly, but not in all cases. For example if we punish someone justly that is also praiseworthy. But if someone is punished justly, there is nothing of which he can be proud. It is nothing admirable, it is nothing

beautiful. But it is necessary. So, in other words, the clear indication here of the expression the noble things used without any qualification is justice does not belong to the noble things. Justice is, if it is of any value, a necessity.

Well, take an ordinary example, to undergo an operation or an appendectomy is necessary from time to time. But no one could ever say it is something noble, praiseworthy, fine, beautiful. His conduct toward the operation maybe, but not the operation itself. Yes? Good. Let us go on here.

No. They believe because they know that these, the noble things, and the opposite come to man by nature and by chance. Yes?

Student: "whereas if a man is wanting in those good qualities which are attained by study and exercise and teaching, and has only the contrary evil qualities, other men are angry with him, and punish and reprove him--of these evil qualities one is impiety,...

Now let us stop here. Of the political virtue men believe, that is here implied, that it comes about by the three things mentioned, care and training and plain teaching. The training is in the center. You must act habitually in order to acquire it, the habit as Aristotle. In other words it is not so clear that the political art or the political virtue is acquired exclusively by teaching then maybe these other things, habitual acting, this training may also be necessary. Yes?

Student: Is it significant in any way in the first three that he mentions, the ugly, the diminutive, or the feeble, that diminutive is in the center.

Yes, sure we must explain why this is in the center. It would because of the emphasis on the noble or the beautiful it would be more rational as the center. There must be some reason. I do not know the reason, but the question is well taken. Now let us read the immediate sequel.

Student: "of these evil qualities one is impiety, another injustice, and they may be described generally as the very opposite of political virtue."

Now let us stop here. He says here, of which one is both unjust and impiety and generally speaking all the opposites of political virtue. And the position of that one is ambiguous and gives rise to the question that there may be other things than political virtue the actions of which

gives rise to indignation. We would have to consider that. But here he speaks of justice, piety, and the rest of the political virtues. And this is strange because there was, there is no reference to the gods in Protagoras' nonmythical speech. In the myth all the time. We see here formerly he had spoken of justice and moderation now he speaks of justice and piety. Piety takes the place of moderation, which is the opposite not only of madness but of as well. This one simply has to know. Of course the first source for such things is Aristotle's Ethics where there are precise and detailed descriptions and definitions. But Aristotle uses the word in the very narrow sense where it means only temperance regarding temporal pleasures. That is a very limited meaning. It means something like sobriety not only regarding intoxicating beverages but also regarding the other things which intoxicate us like success or whatever it may be. And therefore it means sanity in a very broad sense opposed to insanity. But also that aspect of sanity according to which we are reminded of man's limitations, limitations of man as man and therefore in opposition to . This is all here implied. Let us read from here on a larger part.

But let us not forget the main point. Protagoras tries to prove that virtue is and in particular political virtue is teachable. Regarding other things men are not blamed for their lack of it. Whereas regarding the lack of political virtue they are blamed and people get angry at them. Now let us go on from this point. Let us read the end of this passage.

Student: "In such cases any man will be angry with another, and reprimand him,--clearly because he thinks that by study and learning, the virtue in which the other is deficient may be acquired."

Read the beginning of the next sentence.

Student: "If you will think Socrates of what punishment can do for the evil-doer you will see at once..."

No. "This will teach you." He uses the word teaching here because he is preparing the assertion that punishment is a major agency of teaching. And therefore the paradoxical use here. If you only will consider punishment it, the punishment, will teach you. Yes? Someone raised his hand.

Student: In another translation he says virtue to be a part of my application and learning, that would not be sufficient...

No, not alone, surely not. But still inflicted punishment is not what we understand by application, unless you spontaneously say I am very eager to be flogged. Yes?

Student: The practice part is dropped out this time, before it was application, practice and teaching. Here it is just application and teaching.

Yes, but means something more like care, to be concerned with, would be a more literal translation. Yes?

Student: Surely that explanation he gives of why men are angry is an ironically high view of man.

What?

Student: Well, that man becomes angry clearly because he thinks that this all could have been prevented by study.

Yes, but look at the simple case of anger, say a brawl in the street, what is it about? And disregarding the cases of simple drunkenness. Is it not in most cases because someone needs to be offended by something or the other that someone said or did? i.e. by some injustice. You mean the cases of wanton aggressiveness?

Student: No I'm just thinking of, well, in the Gorgias the child who kicks the table seems to show anger in its natural origins...

But the question is that perhaps this will become clearer when we read the whole. I mean in other words that it does not depend whether it is a complete analysis here of anger

and indignation but what Protagoras means in this context. But first let us read it, and return to the questions if they are still needed.

Student: "If you will think, Socrates of what punishment does for the evil-doer, this will teach you that in the opinion of mankind virtue may be acquired; no one punishes the evil-doer under the notion, or for the reason, that he has done wrong,--only the unreasonable fury of a beast acts in that vindictive manner. But he who desires to inflict rational punishment does not punish for a past wrong which cannot be undone; he has regard to the future, and is desirous that the man who is punished, and he who sees him punished, may be deterred from doing wrong again. He punishes for the sake of prevention, thereby clearly implying that virtue is capable of being taught. This is the notion of all who punish others either privately or publicly, And the Athenians, too, your fellow citizens, no less than others, punish and correct on all whom they regard as evil-doers;"

It is nicer in the original, "the other human beings do that and not the least the Athenians, your fellow citizens, they are particularly grand punishers."

Student: "And hence we may infer them to be of the number of those who think that virtue may be acquired and taught. Thus far, Socrates, I have shown you clearly enough, if I am not mistaken, that your countrymen are right in admitting the tinker and the cobbler to advise about politics, and also that they deem virtue to be capable of being taught and acquired."

Yes, now you see here very clearly the difference between the two propositions. That virtue, in the sense of moderation and justice, can be taught does not mean that statesmanship can be taught, and especially if you add in each case every human being. Every human being can in a sense be made just and moderate but no one would say that everyone can be made statesmen. And we will come back to that.

Justice and these other qualities here, piety and so on, are brought about not so much by teaching and application and training but by punishment, but by punishment. In other words the translation of the mythical expression of gift of Zeus is punishment. And here you see the great difference between the arts and the political virtue. While at least in former times an apprentice with a shoemaker or someone

else got a lot of spankings but the true instruction in the art of shoemaking did not consist in the spanking. He had to show him. But here in this case the spanking alone would be enough. You can also say, if the word punishment is too harsh, social pressure, which is also a kind of punishment of course. The arts proper are not acquired by social pressure. The inclination to choose this or that profession may be due to social pressure but not the learning of the art.

Now this doctrine of punishment of which this is an early statement is identical with the Platonic, there is no difference here. No punishment merely for the sake of revenge, merely for a kind of equalization of pain and pleasure as we have read in Gorgias remember? I have suffered pain because someone did to me wrong and equalization demands that he also suffer pain. This is well apart from Socrates or Plato or even Protagoras. It must either improve the evil-doer or deter the other evil-doers. In case the evil-doer is not improvable then he must be executed. We are not squeamish about that. But then the execution especially if it is public and speedy and perhaps somewhat spectacular makes a deep impression all who saw it. And Machiavelli is a good man to read on this subject when he describes how Cesare Borgia who, in order to get some kind of order in the Romagna, the area around Rome where there were so many robbers and so, used a kind of hemlock and when after he had used him and Cesare became unpopular because of the toughness of this guy he had him cut into four pieces and one morning the people of this town found this Ramero was his name? I call him hemlock. Found him in the marketplace cut into pieces and then they still were more overawed by Cesare Borgia then even before. Because he proved to be opposed to such cruel measures.

At any rate, let me first say what I have to say about it. Again we see here that political art, political virtue, and virtue unqualified are used synonymously. But this question arises, if the human agency for producing human virtue is punishment how can Protagoras claim to be a teacher of virtue? Will not all potential pupils run away from him because he inflicts much greater hardship on them. Even Hippias of whom he spoke, he inflicts mathematics on them and then they are already bad enough. Yes. Good. Now someone raised his hand. Well, then let us go on.

Student: "There yet remains one problem..."

Yes, well, is a bit more and a bit different. means absence of a way out. Isn't it used in present day scholarly jargon? The absence of a way out. Now what would be the best equivalent of that?

Student: Dead end?

No not dead end.

Student: More a sense of embarrassment? Like predicament.

Yes, predicament, predicament might do. Yes?

Student: "There yet remains one ~~predicament~~ which has, been raised by you about sons of good men."

Now he comes closer to the real problem because these are the potential addressees of Protagoras' teaching.

Student: "What is the reason why good men teach their sons the knowledge which is gained from teachers, and make them side in that, but do nothing towards improving them in virtues which distinguish themselves? And here, Socrates, I will leave the myth and resume the argument."

"The logos." Now that is terrific. Didn't he talk nonmythically already for two pages? But here we have it straight from his mouth that this was still a myth. Now let us see what this means.

Hitherto Protagoras has only confirmed Socrates' or the Athenians' view that the political art or political virtue or virtue in general is not teachable except if you identify teaching with punishment. Now he begins to take issue with Socrates. Now the issue becomes serious. And an expression of that is that he says everything preceding was myth. The whole treatment of the difficulty caused by Athenian democracy. You remember that the Athenians permit everyone to speak on political matters but not on expert, specialist matters. The whole treatment of the predicament caused by Athenian democracy is myth. The difficulty caused by the practice of the good men, the good cannot be treated mythically. And we know already the reason. Because these good cannot be fooled as Protagoras has said. The multitude you can fool and you can tell them stories but you cannot do this in the case of these clever men who run cities.

And the presupposition of all this is of course that the teaching of Protagoras, which Protagoras supplies, as distinguished from what men in general supply is addressed only to the potential , and not to the shoemakers and so on. Yes. Good. Let us see, now he comes to this point.

Student: "Please consider..."

Now you see this is a little example illustrating what I said before that it is not so easy to say what is and what is not a Platonic myth. This part obviously nonmythical speech from 323 on to 324c belongs to the myth although it is no longer a myth. Here is the transition. Yes?

Student: "Please consider..."

Now this shows already the transition we are no longer in a myth. The word is "reflect," that is reasoning, no longer myth. Myth means you are told a story and you listen to it. Yes?

Student: "Is there or is there not some one quality of which all the citizens must be partakers, if there is to be a city at all? In the answer to this question is contained the only solution of your difficulty; there is no other."

You see also the way of speaking is different, it is now logical and in no way mythical. Reflect, a question, and then reasoning if this and this is so and if this and this is so that and that follows. Yes?

Student: "For if there be any such quality,"

"If there be any such one thing," yes.

Student: "and this quality is not the art of the carpenter, or the smith, or the potter, but justice and self-control and piety and, in a word, human virtue..."

Again the virtue of an . That is very paradoxical as you will see.

Student: "if this is the quality of which all men must be partakers, and which is the very condition of their learning or doing anything else, and if he who is wanting in this, whether he be a child only or a grown man or woman, must be taught and punished, until by punishment he becomes better, and he who rebels against instruction and punishment is either exiled or condemned to death under the idea that he is incurable--..."

Now we must stop here in this sentence otherwise that will be too much material.

So, he speaks truly of the one thing needful in which all citizens must partake and that is justice, moderation,

and saintliness. That is the virtue of the .
Now you see he does no longer speak here of political
virtue as is shown by the reference to children and women
in the immediate sequel. Now what this means this change.
He had spoken of piety before but not of saintliness.
Already we have seen before Protagoras had replaced justice
and moderation by justice and piety and this would in
itself permit the conclusion that he identifies moderation
and piety. Ah, this is not absurd you see from what I
told you before that moderation can be used as the opposite
to insolent pride and then it becomes immediately clear.

But this word had been identified with caution, you
know when he spoke about a man who would not reveal or he
would reveal his injustice and not pretend to be just although
he is unjust lacks this . It is a caution which
commands to lie. And which conclusion is to be drawn from
that I leave to you.

Now however Protagoras adds saintliness to justice and
moderation. The meaning is powerfully clear from the context.
He drops political virtue in any emphatic sense and includes
the virtue of women and children of whom no one would
expect the political art, the art of the statesman. Perhaps
this comes in with a view to women and children. Protagoras
for sure is here completely silent about that virtue which
he teaches.

Now a word about this saintliness. The Greek word
is . Now this word is used in two different connections
the saintly in contradistinction to the just. The just
things are the things of human origin and the saintly are
of divine origin. But the distinction means also this. That
the just consists in duties toward men whereas the saintly
are the duties toward the gods. But there is another op-
position. This saintly is also used in contradistinction to
holy. And then in this connection the saintly means the
profane, in the literal sense, what is in front of the
temple. What is in the temple is saintly and what is outside
the temple but still demanded by the gods.... Well, Aristotle
uses in the Politics I believe the term , holy
ones and when he speaks of abortion, up to which point
abortion is permitted beyond which it is no longer saintly.
And it has always this implication of a divine law.

Now, at any rate, this much is clear. That virtue of
which Protagoras speaks here consists of three virtues, we
never had so many before, justice, moderation, and
saintliness. And it so happens that he enlarges here also
the addressees of these things to three groups, children,
men, and women. And I have indicated that there could be
a connection here between these two things. However let us
go on here to achieve as much as we can without rushing.
We are still in the midst of that long conditioned sentence

but there is a question.

Student: How can after listing justice, moderation and saintliness how can he then call that the especially later on when he applies that to women and children as well?

Yes, that is a great problem which we cannot bring up now. Well, I can only give a general answer. Protagoras confuses the issue. Whereas when it was clear what he was teaching was something addressed to the cream of Athens, the main cream of Athens. And now he drowns that as it were in something which every child, every women, and perhaps even every slave should be. But we must have the facts to answer that. But in order to satisfy you and not keep you in any unnecessary suspense, the point is this: well, the simplest thing is I read to you my statement at the end of this passage and then we go on.

Protagoras claims to teach human beings in well-advisedness which includes the art of speaking. And Socrates calls this the political art. Protagoras, in contradistinction to Gorgias does not limit his claim to the teaching of rhetoric but he claims much more, well-advisedness concerns as much the thoughts as what you say. And Gorgias also made his mistake when he said he does not ordinarily teach justice. And this brought him into great troubles because he would be responsible for the misuse of rhetoric by some unjust students. Gorgias' claim is much more modest than that of Protagoras but also much less cautious than the claim of Protagoras. Now Protagoras puts a much stronger emphasis on the danger which he incurs than does Gorgias. And on his precautionary measures, you remember that long speech, his great claim, that he teaches the political art is not one part of his precautionary measures. In other words he guarantees the parent when your son comes to me he will become juster or moderate, more pious every day, which Gorgias never claimed. That may very well be but there is a difference between the danger of which he thinks, namely that the parents, the fathers might be envious of this man who takes their sons away from him and who will admire him more than their own father, an unbearable insult. But there is also another danger of which he does not think and Socrates reminds him which can be stated very simply as follows, you make a great mistake Protagoras, you think that many can be trifled with very easily, You remember he said the many don't notice anything, here you are mistaken. The Athenian demos is very clever, Therefore, warned by Socrates of the danger of which he is running in Athens, he in his long speech drowns the distinction between the virtue of the top men which he teaches, into the virtue which is expected of everyone, including women

and children. So he in contradistinction to Gorgias brings in the fact that the art which he teaches can be misused. Gorgias had granted that his art could be misused but he said it was not my fault. Gorgias is so cautious that no one who has heard his speech can think of the fact that his art can be misused because virtue, in the sense of justice and moderation, all the time; the whole world teaches moderation and justice and I, too. But he doesn't speak at all in this long speech of his own teaching, he speaks only of what other people teach, the fathers, the wet-nurses, the nurses and the pedagogues, the school-teachers and the city. And this is an amazing thing. After all the whole purpose of the speech was to make clear to this ambitious but not very bright young man Hippocrates what he will learn from Protagoras. And then Protagoras makes this very long speech surpassing in length all comparable speeches ever occurring in Plato. He makes this long speech and then the boy doesn't know a little, a tiny, a wee bit more of what Protagoras teaches. Isn't that amazing? And he makes his art or whatever it is utterly unattractive to Hippocrates because he brings it together with all these kinds of teachings which he has gone through and which he loathes, grammar school etc. and then still more, no! In other words Protagoras plays into Socrates' hands. So he doesn't have to say anything. He does exactly what Socrates wanted him to do and the funny thing is that this is done by Protagoras who boasts of his candor, he doesn't conceal the fact that he is a sophist. He is outspoken because lack of outspokenness merely increases suspicion, makes life worse for him. He boasts of his candor but owing to Socrates' warning he is super-cautious, so much so that he doesn't bring out at all what is his teaching, so much that he endangers his whole enterprise. More simply stated, this teacher of well-advisedness is very poor at advising himself. Now to what extent Hippocrates became aware of this marvelous game which Socrates is playing with Protagoras, it is impossible to say. But one thing that is interesting about this kind of thing is that in this whole speech he doesn't say one word about his own . Socrates had told him what in spite of your marvelous candor and caution, both at the same time, you don't see what you are up against here in Athens. This is a very clever demo, they cannot be so easily trifled with and you have to be very careful here. And Protagoras and Socrates laugh at each other, Protagoras understands him and he is very cautious, but he is too cautious. And this must have its affect on that poor boy. Good.

Now this is my explanation of why there is this back and forth between the virtue of man, of , and then that virtue which is expected of everyone however low. Yes?

Student: I shutter to do so but may I give a lower explanation more favorable to Protagoras. It struck me that this is ~~in~~ consistent with the hypocrisy that he urged before and this happy hypocrisy is part of the political necessity, as the sophists see it, getting those who do not by nature have a certain virtue to partake in it. To get man to behave according to virtue which by its nature belongs only to a few, but it happens to be necessary for more.

Well, that is all right as far as it goes but you must consider the context. Socrates came there with Hippocrates. You remember he warned him of the dangerous thing. Soul-food you cannot carry away in a basket you have to carry it in your soul and therefore if it has corrupting effects it will have it right away. You see? Whereas if it is body food you can show it to an experienced man or woman at home And it is a very great risk you take. And how can Socrates be so unscrupulous to expose poor Hippocrates, the son of a fine family to such influences. We will see. Socrates is such a marvelous manipulator. I mean the word has now a very low meaning but he is such a marvelous leader of souls that he makes Protagoras, this great Protagoras, dance to his tune.

Student: I'm not denying that. I am just saying that there was a certain truth in what Protagoras said even if he was being led by the nose.

Yes, well sure. Otherwise how could he have the reputation. But still think of that poor boy who came here to hear magnificent fireworks as you would expect from such people and who was wishing to hear of a kind of teaching which was not as dull and and not as much interspersed with spanking as the teachings he had hitherto. I mean the fact that Protagoras had told him that he won't learn mathematics doubtless was a good bait. But this was a long time ago and in addition to say what you do not teach is not enough, you have also to say what you teach. Good.

This is in my opinion why the bait, the virtue of the never completely disappears but then it is also obscured by this ordinary virtue which even women are supposed to have and which of course is in no way attractive to our slave-hunting fellow Hippocrates.

We are now in the middle of a very interesting story but for sheer reasons of vulgar prudence, lest I create another scandal, I will stop here.

Plato's Protagoras, A Course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science at the
University of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 9, April 26, 1965

Now let us begin. I remind you of the context. Protagoras claims to teach virtue or the political art. Socrates doubts whether these things are teachable. Protagoras proves the teachability of virtue by a myth and by a logos, which logos however is part of the myth. More precisely he proves in this way that all men, particularly Athenians act wisely in regarding virtue as teachable. And the Athenians act wisely in permitting everyone to partake in political deliberation. This we have finished.

Now the point at which we are engaged is where Protagoras proves that not merely all men but that the outstanding men, the good teach virtue to their sons, contrary to what Socrates had asserted.

Now the passage that we read at the end of last meeting up to 325a inclusively, if you have the passage tell them on what page it is.

Student: Page twenty-three in the LLA edition. We were in the middle of that long conditional sentence just at the mark b.

Now only one moment. In the passage which we read last time, Protagoras had shown that the teaching in that virtue which the polis needs embraces three virtues--justice, moderation and saintliness. And in addition there is the virtue of children, men or women, also three again as it happens. And this teaching takes place above all by punishment. This much we have seen.

And now this teaching also applied by the outstanding men to their own kins.

Now however it becomes more specific in 325b in the conclusion of that very long conditional sentence. "if this is so," namely if all men must partake of virtue, yes, go on from there.

Student: "if what I am saying be true, good men have their sons taught other things and not this, do consider how extraordinary their conduct would appear to be."

More literally, "how strange, how amazing, how marvelous the good ones would become." He omits here "men," for a reason which will appear later.

He now returns to what the good in particular teach their sons. This doesn't come out clearly in the translation probably, Before he had spoken of children which means normally since men were more interested in their sons in former times than in their daughters,

means ordinarily sons but still the word sons is unmistakable. Xenophon says somewhere in the Memorabilia, in a speech of Socrates, "if a man dies and leaves his sons to educate and his daughters to watch," which implies that the main point of having daughters is not education but to watch them. Well, uh, but this is only a little joke.

The good men surely teach their sons this common or universal virtue which is expected of everyone. If they did not, they would believe that virtue arises in a strange, marvelous manner. We can say by divine gift.

Now let us go on here.

Student: "For we have shown that they think virtue capable of being taught and cultivated both in private and public; and, notwithstanding, they have their sons taught lesser matters, ignorance of which does not involve the punishment of death: but greater things, of which the ignorance may cause death and exile to those who have no training or knowledge of virtue--aye, and confiscation as well as death, and, in a word, may be the ruin of families--those things, I say, they are supposed not to teach them,--not to take the utmost care that they should learn. How improbable is this Socrates!

Now let us stop here. You remember that he opposed Socrates' thesis that men like Pericles had not taken care of the education of their sons in virtue. Here he begins to refer back again to not merely the outstanding men, but human beings in general. They believe that virtue is teachable. Why else do they spank people? We have demonstrated, he says, the first person plural. Now the demonstration occurs in the myth. It is not I, Protagoras, who is speaking in the myth, that is in a way a common view. Yes, let us continue.

Incidentally, here he returns to children from the sons of which he has spoken before. That is a kind of return to the more common things, the universal virtues as distinguished from that outstanding virtue. Yes.

Student: "Education and admonition commence in the first years of childhood, and last to the very end of life. Mother and nurse and father and tutor are vying with one another...

No, that isn't..."the nurse, and the father, and the mother, and the tutor," tutor was a slave, "and the father himself," this big figure, even he!

Student: "and the father himself are vying with one another

about the improvement of the child as soon as ever he is able to understand what is being said to him: he cannot say or do anything without their setting forth to him that this is just and that is unjust; this is noble, that is base; this is pious, that is impious; do this and don't do that."

Now these are of course great verities but the question is what Protagoras makes of them. Yes.

Student: "And if he willingly obeys, well and good;...

No. That's not there. "If he willingly obeys, no apologies."

Student: "if not, he is straightened by threats and blows, like a piece of bent or warped wood."

Yes, "with threats and spankings." So, in other words silence ~~wabbutt~~ any rewards, I mean candies they might get, but emphasis again on threats and spankings is the major education of the wise.

We see here that the early training of these "kids", sons of great fathers, is chiefly in the hands of people other than the fathers. The father is somehow the "father figure" as they say it now days and is somehow in the background. Most of the spanking and threatening is done by other people.

And you see here this nice three division, three things that they are taught--just, that is justice of course; the noble or base, that belongs to moderation according to this scheme here; and finally the pious which belongs to saintliness... Yes.

Student: "At a later stage..."

You see he gives the whole survey of education. I have no doubt that the historians of education, of Greek education, have made the most of this passage. But we are not interested in classical education, we are interested in the Protagoras. Yes.

Student: "At a later stage they send him to teachers, and enjoin them to see to his manners even more than to his reading and music;"

Now "manners is too...that is to say decency would be the very least. Yes, nice deportment.

Student: "see to his good deportment even more than to his

reading and music; and the teachers do as they are asked. And when the boy has learned his letters and is beginning to understand what is written,...

He doesn't say that, nothing of "boys," it is still children here, although in this case they are probably boys. But it is interesting, the change. Yes.

Student: "And when the child has learned his letters and is beginning to understand what is written, as before he understood only what was spoken, they put into his hands the works of great poets, which he reads sitting on a bench at school;..."

"The good poets," the great poets reminds us of the great society in contradistinction to the good society. A good poet is a very high praise at that time.

Student: "good poets, which he reads sitting on a bench at school; in these are contained many admonitions, and many tales,..."

Has it become clear that they compel them to do so? That is important. And they compel them to learn by heart.

Student: No, that doesn't come across.

Yes, well that is important because most people don't like to learn by heart and they have to be compelled to do so.

Student: "in these are contained many admonitions, and many tales, and praises, and encomia of ancient famous men,..."

"Of ancient good men," good men. Yes.

Student: "which he is required to learn by heart..."

"Compelled," compelled.

Student: "which he is compelled to learn by heart, in order that he may imitate or emulate them and desire to become like them."

Yes, now this second stage is characterized by concern with in Greek, deportment with which the nurse and the people at home are not so concerned. This nice deportment belongs to the virtue of of moderation in that broad sense. And this is entrusted to teachers who of course also use compulsion. But these

teachers also praise as we have seen. Whom? The boys if they do good? Of course not. They praise the good men of old.

Now at this stage of the education is no longer open to all, not all Athenian citizens learn these things. This will become perfectly clear in the sequel but not every Athenian got that. Go on.

Student: "Then again the teachers of the lyre take similar care that their young disciple is self-controlled..."

"Moderate."

Student: "moderate and gets into no mischief; and when they have taught him the use of the lyre, they introduce him to the poems of other good poets, who are the lyric poets; and these they set to music, and make their harmonies and rhythms quite familiar to the children's souls,..."

Again they compel them. Teaching and learning is painful, as Aristotle in his wisdom said. And since men by nature dislike the painful, especially unreasonable human beings, they must be compelled. And therefore the great change in education when it was felt that learning can be fun, to some extent yes but not simply. Yes, good.

Student: "in order that they may learn to be more gentle, and harmonious, and rhythmical, and so more fitted for speech and action; for the life of man in every part has need of harmony and rhythm."

Yes, this is a very much higher stage. The music teachers too teach moderation, i.e. the beautiful, the noble in contradistinction to the just and the pious. Well, we cannot help but think here of the education of the soldiers in Plato's Republic which has the same goal. The goal of the whole education being love, eros, of the beautiful, longing for the beautiful rather than justice as justice.

You see he puts here "speaking" before acting, contrary to what he had done before. Well, we have observed earlier in 316d to be the connection between Protagoras and the teachers of music. Protagoras' group appeared to be like the chorus, you remember that when Socrates saw them first? We approach now gradually the peculiar teaching of Protagoras himself which is of course not what a child gets from his nurse or his mother, not even from his father. We approach more and more what not every Athenian is taught. Remember his point was the virtues he mentioned which everyman must possess and more particular, every

Athenian.

Now Protagoras we know teaches rhetoric and therefore he puts teaching first. Decent deportment consists primarily in deed not in speech. It has also some consequences in speech but the point is that the child is nice, is seen and not heard. And that means action, deed, not speech. But now the emphasis shifts to speech because he is coming to the higher ranges of education. Yes?

Student: "Then they send them to the master of gymnastic, in order that their bodies may better minister to the sound mind, and that they may not be compelled through bodily weakness to play the coward in war or on any other occasion. And the more socially influential people are...

No, let us say, more literally, "those who are most powerful." That is better.

Student: "And the more powerful...

No, "and this is being done by those who are most powerful." And the most powerful are the wealthiest.

Student: "their children...

"Their sons."

Student: "their sons begin to go to school soonest and leave off latest."

Yes. Now that is very interesting because now we see already clearly the difference in education. There is not one and the same education in virtue given to all, The difference in the education given to the poor and that to their children and that given to the rich. It is this education of course which enables the rich to hold their own in a democracy and to be the leaders. They are being taught a more refined kind of virtue as is indicated by the words moderation, taste, the graces of both speech and deed.

Now the conclusion that we can draw already here is this that the virtue taught by Protagoras will not be the one which Zeus has given indiscriminately to all human beings and which is inculcated by spanking. Here there is no longer any reference to compulsion, although there is an indication of that when they say that those who go the earliest to the teachers and are the latest to get rid of them. There is sort of a negative posture, children going to school, implied in that.

The difference between Protagoras and these teachers is that his teaching is a pleasure whereas the other teachers, their teaching is a kind of burden. We remember the reference to Hippias. Protagoras' potential pupils are of course the sons of the wealthy. He takes honoarium, well, it ain't hay what he demands. Now this leads to a difficulty because, as we know from the Apology, 23c, the companions of Socrates were also the sons of the wealthy. So therefore if the thinks that Socrates was a sophist, there was some external plausibility. Protagoras is surrounded by the sons of the rich, Socrates is surrounded by the sons of the rich. That is simple. Yes, now.

Student: "When they have done with masters, the State again compels them to learn the laws, and live after the pattern which they furnish, and not after their own fancies; and just as in learning to write, the writing master first draws lines with a style for the use of the young beginner, and gives him the tablet and makes him follow the lines, so the city draws the laws, which were the invention of good lawgivers living in the olden time; and compels the young man to rule and be ruled in accordance with them; and he who transgresses them is to be corrected, or in other words, called to account, which is a term used not only in your country, but also in many others,..."

Well, of course one should not translate, "in your country," but rather in "your city."

Now you see the last stage, again conclusion, exercised by the laws. But what has he omitted in this long way from the wet-nurse to the full-fledged, mature citizen who is educated by the laws? Which stage has he omitted?

Student: His stage.

Exactly. He does not speak of his own teaching. It is enough for him to have indicated where it comes in, somewhere between the last and the stage before the last. The peak is somehow omitted. He returns to that education here which is common to all, the education supplied by the laws. The comparison of laws with letters is very natural, laws are ordinarily written in an advanced society. But more than that, law is essentially by convention just as letters are. The city is related to the citizens as the writing teachers are to those who cannot yet write. Now, what would follow from that? That sufficiently advanced people do not need the laws. Well, there is a statement somewhere in Aristotle that those properly trained, the philosophers,

would do what the reasonable laws prescribe without needing the prescription.

The laws themselves, if they are good we see here, are not the work of the citizen-body but the inventions of superior men who, being the inventors of the laws, were not yet subject to the laws or trained by them. The art of legislation which is practiced by these men, the highest part of the political art according to the Gorgias is infinitely higher than the virtue acquired by obedience to the laws, i.e. ordinary political virtue. Now the question arises: will not Protagoras rather teach this legislative art rather than the rhetorical art? That remains a question.

The good and old legislators--that is essential, that good laws must be old. This is in a certain contrast to the critique of antiquity which Protagoras had given in the myth--you know, the savage, imperfect beginnings--and also his critique of the wise men of old, the old sophists as he calls it, especially the poets which he gave in 316d. So this we must keep in mind. There is a certain quality of antiquity, virtue of antiquity, which Protagoras, speaking politically, cannot deny.

Well, from the point of view of say the democracy of course, these old laws stem from a predemocratic age and they act therefore as a brake on democracy. Just as today, you know the famous discussion in this country about the original intentions of the framers of the Constitution and the Constitution as proper, as written down, and as modified by Supreme Court decisions? Good.

Now the conclusion. Human life as a whole is nothing but education in virtue, from the cradle to the grave. And the conclusion?

Student: "Now, when there is all this care about virtue private and public, why, Socrates, do you still wonder and doubt whether virtue can be taught? Cease to wonder for it would be far more surprising if it couldn't be taught."

Yes. Virtue is teachable, that is now proven. If you deny that virtue is teachable, Socrates, you deny among other things efficacy of work of laws, a major educational instrument as we have seen. In that case, you Socrates and not I, the stranger-sophist, would be the corrupter.

Now the most famous statement of Socrates regarding laws and obedience to the laws, lawabidingness, is the Crito. It would be good to contrast this point here with the statement of Socrates in the Crito, and especially because he does speak in the Crito about the Athenian laws regarding education. But he runs over this

subject as if it were a hot iron, he barely mentions it, but he mentions it. Lawabidingness means of course also to accept the whole education supplied by the city as good. Does Socrates believe that? That is a great problem in the Crito and of course beyond that.

So, now we know it. Education can be taught. But the trouble is that the education that can be taught is not clearly that of, that virtue can be taught, the virtue that can be taught is not necessarily the virtue taught by Protagoras. That is a difficulty. Protagoras, as it were, tried to muscle in, if we may say so, between the most advanced private teaching and virtue and the most impressive public teaching, namely the laws. We must see how this comes out.

So this is the end of the second part of Protagoras' long speech. Now a great difficulty remains.

Student: "But why then do the sons of good fathers often turn out ill? How come?"

He admits the fact you see, that this happens. And he proceeds to give the reason. Yes?

Student: "There is nothing very wonderful in this; ~~for~~, if I am right in what I am saying, a city can exist only if everyone is an expert in this thing, virtue. If so--and nothing can be truer--then I will further ask you to imagine, as an illustration, some other pursuit or branch of knowledge which may be assumed equally to be the condition of the existence of a city."

So the argument is very strange. Many good fathers have inferior sons. What's the reason? The reason is that everyone must be an expert in virtue. That is not a good reason is it? Protagoras doesn't complete his thought. What he implies is that it is impossible that everyone should be a good expert in every pursuit. After all a shoemaker is expert in shoemaking but he may be a poor shoemaker nevertheless. Now therefore all men have to be experts in virtue but many may well be poor experts, What they can produce may be comparable to the very poor shoes which a very poor shoemaker makes.

Yes, now he gives an example. He will improve it by taking another art. He implies that virtue is an art comparable to these, shoemaking and what-have-you. The example which he chooses is not shoemaking but flute-playing, as we will see. Will you now read on?

Student: "Suppose that there could be no city unless we were all flute-players, as far as each had the capacity, and everybody was teaching everybody the art, both in private and public, and reproving the bad player as freely and openly as every man now teaches justice and the laws,....

Well, literally it is the "just and the legal things." They are and they are not identical. As Aristotle puts it, the noble things are somehow the just things, meaning the noble things tend to be the just things or wish to be the just things or ought to be the just things but they are not necessarily identical. But our life proceeds on the premeise that we would be in the constant state of revolution or anarchy if we did not assume somehow that the legal things are the just things. This is indicated.

Yes?

Student: "not concealing them as he would conceal the other arts, but imparting them--for all of us profit from each other's justice and virtue, and this is the reason why everyone is so ready to teach justice and the legal things;"

Yes, now let us stop here perhaps. Take flute-playing he says. If there could not be a city without everyone being a flute-player of sorts, everyone would instruct everyone else in flute-playing, from dawn to dusk, from the cradle to the grave. I.e. everyone would be a flute-player of sorts and a teacher of flute-playing at the same time. After all not every flute-player can teach flute-playing.

Accordingly everyone is a just man in fact of sorts and a teacher of justice. More precisely, everyone is more of a teacher of justice than himself just, because we have seen what is required is only a kind of varnish, appearance of justice. Everyone teaches everyone else the just and noble things. He compares these things...what does he say?--no one conceals them, no one is envious of them, no one conceals them as they do the other as it is in Greek. That means literally works of art, artful devices. Justice and the laws therefore are artful devices.

Everyone is necessarily not a just and law-abiding man, strictly speaking, but a knower of them, and he will tell everybody else. And why? Because everybody's interested in the other fellow's being just and law-abiding. Don't you see? This is of course a slight overstatement because not everyone is interested in

everyone else's being just and law-abiding because if this were so there could be no fellow criminals. After all every criminal has an interest in his fellow criminal not being just and law-abiding.

Here Protagoras completes his sanguine picture of society as a model institution, as an institution of moral education, which is a theme repeated in many speeches on solemn occasions and of course it has an element of truth. But we must understand the peculiarity of Protagoras' speech. Society, the big institution of moral education, means in Protagoras that what society does is the sufficient cause of virtue. Virtue is entirely due to what now would be called social pressure. And we remember what he said about the sham character of that virtue, of which everyone is supposed to partake. This is the only virtue with which he is concerned here as a universal virtue and this is indeed a strictly social phenomenon because everyone has an interest in the justice of another, a selfish interest, but not in his own, that would lead us beyond society.

Yes. Good. Now we come to the next sentence.

Student: "--suppose, I say, that there were the same readiness and liberality among us in teaching one another flute-playing, do you imagine, Socrates, that the sons of good flute-players would be more likely to be good than the sons of bad ones? I think not. Their sons grow up to be distinguished or undistinguished according to their own natural capacities as flute-players, and the son of a good player would often turn out to be a bad one, and the son of a bad player to be a good one, and all flute-players would be good enough in comparison of those who were ignorant...

No, one should say, "nevertheless." "Nevertheless, all would be sufficiently good flute-players," compared with complete laymen and people who do not understand anything of flute-playing.

Now here he begins to refer to the difference of natures. He had before referred to the difference between the rich and the poor regarding education. Here a more fundamental difference comes to sight. Not all men are equally gifted for flute-playing or for virtue but no man is a mere layman regarding virtue.

Now this does not...what did he say in the myth? when the question of virtue came up? What did Zeus say? when Hermes asked him what should be done?

Student: Spread it out evenly.

Not quite. "All should participate." But he didn't say that all should participate equally. So there is no formal contradiction to that. He only brings something out which he did not bring out in the myth.

Student: There's a contradiction in the sense that it couldn't strictly be compared with an art.

Yes, but according to Protagoras it could. I mean the question is not developed here, for very good reason. Whether abilities you acquire by spanking are not fundamentally different from abilities that can never be acquired by spanking? Well, for example, people cannot become good painters by spanking. But if we disregard this important difference, if we understand teachability so far-wide that it includes faculties which we acquire by being spanked then we can say that virtue is as teachable as painting. Yes? Only painting is not demanded of everyone because what would we do with so many painters? Some of you may have seen the exhibitions on 57th. Street from time to time and will have thought of that. Good. I haven't seen them for a long time and I am sure they are much better now. Good.

So, here again he reminds us of his claim. Just as the difference between the rich and the poor is important for his teaching, the difference between the gifted and the ungifted may be important for Protagoras' teaching. He may be able to teach that level of virtue which is accessible only to the most gifted, for all we know.

Yes, now go on..

Student: "In like manner I would have you consider that he who appears to you to be the worst of those who have been brought up in laws and society, would appear to be a just man and a master of justice if he were to be compared with...

"Craftsman," I mean in teaching others.

Student: "If he were to be compared with men who had no education, or courts of justice, or laws, or any restraints upon them..."

No, "no necessity of compulsion." No compulsion whatever. Yes.

Student: "which compelled them..."

In Greek it is also repeated. So the emphasis is very much on compulsion. Yes.

Student: "--with the savages, for example, whom the poet Pherecrates exhibited on the stage at the last year's Lenaeon festival. If you were living among men such as the man-haters in his chorus, you would be only too glad to meet with Eurybates and Phrynondas,...

These were very famous local criminals.

Student: "and you would sorrowfully long to revisit the rascality of this part of the world."

Yes. Now everyone living in civilized society, even ~~the~~ greatest criminals, is just compared with uncivilized men as presented to the Athenians in a comedy last year. This last year, if one happens to know the date of that comedy, would mean that the dramatic date of the Protagoras would be 421-422, i.e. after Pericles' death; whereas as we have seen a passage which pre-supposes that Pericles was still alive. In other words, Plato is rather indifferent here regarding the precise dramatic date.

And in a comedy, naturally because we are so remote from these barbarian things we can laugh about them, can only laugh about them. Again this confirms that virtue is by human agency, more specifically by laws. All men are by nature bad, we can say. In the myth he said they lived in dispersion, dissociated as Hobbes would have said. And they owe their goodness entirely to this civilizing process, to this educating process going on the whole day and their whole life.

This reminds indeed of Hobbes and in most of the literature it is simply said well, that is the same that Hobbes said. And in a way, if we don't go deeper, that is correct but still there is a minor difference I believe. Yes.

Student: Hobbes describes man as having rationally sought out...here, let's have a society.

Yes, that is true but this has a deeper reason. What induces man to go out of the state of nature?

Student: Self-preservation.

Yes, or fear of violent death. But this fear of violent death as Hobbes interprets it is practically the same as reason, practically the same, not theoretically, because Hobbes says fear includes the fear of fear and therefore precaution and taking care of the future, in other words, a kind of rationality. But more simply, Hobbes teaches of course that there is a natural right, and the

natural right is self-preservation. Nothing of this kind in Protagoras! That we must never forget. There are many more differences but this is the minimum and most obvious difference which we must never forget. There is no natural right here in Protagoras, all right is convention.

Education is, so to speak, omnipotent--logos, speech, is omnipotent. But not quite, nature does play a role. You know, in other words, the gifted and ungifted difference cannot be bridged by speech.

Protagoras vindicates here the unsatisfactory sons of the good fathers. They are not as bad as you, Socrates, say. They are sages when compared with any uncivilized man. Think of the corrupting influence of Alcibiades--what is wrong with that compared with true savagery? So not Protagoras but Socrates accuses the Athenians; whereas Protagoras vindicates all these things. We will come back to that later.

Yes. We go on here.

Student: "So you are actually living a life of luxury, Socrates..."

Yes, "you are spoiled, you are spoiled." You derive all the benefits, efficient police, and are not even grateful for them.

Student: "You are spoiled, Socrates, and the reason is that all men are teachers of virtue, each one according to his ability; and you say, Where are the teachers? You might as well ask,..."

Socrates' error, according to which virtue is not teachable, because Socrates doesn't know any teachers of virtue, is due to the fact that all men are teachers of virtue, if to different degrees. The teaching of virtue is so effective that there is no need for special teachers of virtue. But it has of course a very great implication. If there is no need for special teachers of virtue, what happens?

Student: Protagoras isn't required.

Exactly. So Protagoras saws off the limb on which he is sitting.

Now there is an interesting parallel to the passage here in the Apology of Socrates, 24e to 25a, where Meletus the accuser of Socrates says, "everyone in Athens teaches virtue. The only corruptor is Socrates." Everyone teaches virtue, everyone is fundamentally fine. And people like to hear that much better than the opposite. That is a part of human nature. Yes.

Student: "You might as well ask, Who teaches Greek? For of that too there will not be any teachers found."

Yes, there are as many teachers of virtue as there are teachers of one's mother-tongue. And therefore there are no teachers of one's mother-tongue. Everyone learns it as a small child. But is there not a slight difference here between speaking one's mother-tongue and using it effectively and powerfully in political assemblies? So here is again where Protagoras might come in. While everyone speaks Greek, not everyone speaks Greek effectively. That he might learn. Yes.

Student: "Or you might ask, Who is to teach the sons of our artisans this same art which they have learned of their fathers? He and his fellow-workmen have taught them to the best of their ability,...

This reference to the best of their ability according to the Greek, "everyone was able," these are references again to the differences of natures and therefore the possibility of a super-teacher of the highest degree of virtue.

Student: "--but who will carry them further in their arts? And you would certainly have a difficulty, Socrates, in finding a teacher of them; but there would be no difficulty in finding a teacher of those who are wholly ignorant. And this is true of virtue or of anything else;"

Yes. Now in the case of the ordinary arts, as distinguished from speaking one's mother tongue, it is not easy that a teacher comes to sight. But it is not impossible, as in the case of speaking one's mother tongue, for people learn these arts from their fathers or their father's friends. But this is exactly the case of virtue, that they also learn from their fathers and their father's friends. The teachers other than the father--that is to say, Protagoras--teach the same thing that the fathers do, only better. This, however, is an ambivalent phenomenon. Since he teaches the same things, he cannot be accused of heterodoxy. But since he does it better than the fathers, the fathers might become envious. Their sons prefer Protagoras to them.

Yes. Now let us go on.

Student: "if a man is better able than we are to promote virtue ever so little, we must be content with the result."

So, Protagoras will teach only those not taught by

their fathers, orphans. There was a reference to orphans when he spoke of Cleinias. At any rate he belongs to those people who help a little bit, only a tiny little, wee bit toward virtue. So what's wrong with that? A nice stranger coming and giving a nice little bit of advice preventing such a scoundrel like Alcibiades from committing another of his impossibilities, what is wrong with that? But on the other hand, why should one flock to such a man? We now consider that "but."

Student: "A teacher of this sort I believe myself to be,...

"Of those, I believe to be one," meaning of those who teach a tiny little bit. So that is not much but now immediately after that.

Student: "and above all other men to have the knowledge which makes a man noble and good; and I give my pupils their money's worth..."

Now let us first wait here. But I, Protagoras, happen to be the most competent teacher of virtue. Now we see here where the only occasion where Protagoras speaks in this very long speech of his art. The only one. But in a very limited sense. He speaks only of the fact that he teaches the just and the legal things. Now here is a clear contrast with Gorgias who came into trouble, as you will remember, because he did not say that he teaches just things. The consequence of this is that the theme of the Protagoras who says that I do what everyone else does, the theme of the Protagoras is not how must I live, or how ought I live, namely justly or unjustly, the theme of the Gorgias; but merely is virtue teachable or, in a way, what is virtue?

Now this is, of course, connected with the fact that Gorgias was tired, as we remember, while Protagoras, as we have seen, is not tired. He wouldn't make such a speech, without any notes of course, if he were tired. And of course we must also not forget Protagoras' famous candor which is identical with his caution, which also distinguishes him from Gorgias.

So, in other words, I am the teacher of gentlemen, no one is comparable to me. Yes.

Student: "and I give my pupils their money's worth, and even more, as they themselves confess."

Now one second. Protagoras is not merely a teacher of justice, he acts justly. He claims less for his services than he should. The just man is the man who demands less than his due according to Aristotle in the Ethics. So, I mean, there is no danger for our friend Hippocrates in

associating himself with such a paragon of justice. Yes.

Student: "And therefore I have introduced the following mode of payment:--When a man has been my pupil, if he likes he pays my price, but there is no compulsion; and if he does not like, he has only to go into a temple and take an oath of the value of the instructions, and he pays no more than he declares to be their value."

After all he doesn't teach for nothing. But we see also that Protagoras, too, needs gods. How can he get his money in dubious cases if these pupils do not take seriously an oath? Well, at any rate, be it only for this low reason, we can be sure that Protagoras will not teach impiety. That is the surest road of losing money. This much is clear.

Yes, but this passage is particularly interesting for the following reason: Protagoras teaches virtue in a most competent manner and so to speak the peak, the cream of virtue for money. But we have been told that everybody teaches virtue gratis. Everyone teaches to everyone else all the time virtue. Now why do the other people teach it without payment and Protagoras teaches for payment? Protagoras has no exaggerated notion of human unselfishness. The others teach virtue and justice because they derive benefit from it. In 327b, if we can return to that for a moment, read it.

Student: "For all of us profit from each other's virtue and justice."

Yes, that's it. Now here is a very interesting thing. Hes says us, yes? in your reading? The manuscript reading is "you," the plural. "Us" is a correction by the first editor of Plato. "you," of course teach virtue gratis because "you" are benefited by it. But I am not benefited by it. If the Athenians become more just, I am not benefited. I therefore must get a remuneration. Though he was a very respectable editor, a very respectable editor, I prefer the manuscript reading of this part. Did you get the point? The justice and virtue of one another is useful to you in the plural and therefore naturally you teach it free. But it is not useful to me, for today I am in Athens and tomorrow I am in another city and I must get a remuneration; to say nothing of the fact that I teach it so much more competently than the others do. Yes. Good.

Now we are, well, we are not yet finished with the speech of Protagoras. Next, 328c.

Student: "And such is my logos Socrates by which I endeavour to show that virtue may be taught, and that this is the opinion of the Athenians. And I have also attempted to show that you are not to wonder at good fathers having bad sons, or at good sons having bad fathers, of which the sons of Polycleitus afford an example, who are the companions of our friends here, Paralus and Xanthippus, but are nothing in comparison with their father; and this is true of the sons of many other artists. And yet I ought not to say the same of Paralus and Xanthippus themselves, for they are young and there is still hope of them."

Now here it is shown that his view regarding the teachability of virtue agrees with the Athenian view, so he is saying. And that the case of the inferior sons is not as hopeless as Socrates had asserted because they are still young. This is a proper ending for this speech--hope, altogether a bright picture.

We can also say that he defends both the fathers and the sons against Socrates' implicit structure. He has the best of all worlds, or as one can also say, he eats cake and has it. Now this will become clear in the sequel. Good.

That was a terrific speech and we, by splitting it up, have not had the full impact of the speech. For this to be done it would have to be in a perfect translation which I am sure does not exist but which could be made--an almost perfect translation--and read by a man trained in all the arts of elocution and rhetoric; then we would be duly impressed. So we have to make an effort of our imagination to recover what the feat or the enjoyment that the people present have had.

Now let us go on anyway.

Student: "Protagoras finished and came to the end..."

No, that is not good. "Protagoras, having shown off so many and such like things, stopped the speech." Now this "so many," the quantity--Protagoras' speech is unusually long for such an occasion. The long speech of Callicles in the Gorgias, the long speeches of Glaucon and Adeimantus at the beginning of the Second Book of the Republic, are nothing half as long as this speech. And the speech is here indicated to be an exhibition; that is, one kind of rhetoric which according to Aristotle has the purpose of showing the power of the speaker. A forensic speech, for example, does not have as the primary purpose showing the power of the speaker but to get an acquittal or, for that matter, a condemnation. And it also, the forensic speech, has at its end the beautiful; whereas the forensic speech the just and the deliberative speech the expedient.

Now this is a speech of this kind--a tour de force, a big show, a marvelous show to which we have been entertained. Yes, now begin again.

Student: "Protagoras having shown off so many and such like things, stopped the speech, and in my ear
"So charming left his voice, that I
the while
Thought him still speaking; still stood
fixed to hear."
At length, when the truth dawned upon me, that
he had really finished, not without difficulty
I began to collect myself, and looking at Hippocrates,
I said to him:"

Yes, let us stop here for a moment. You see here that this shows again the virtue of a narrated dialogue. Socrates could not have told very well to Protagoras in this way how this speech had affected him.

And I think the description is very clear. He is still waiting; he cannot finish his beauty. He cannot finish but he finished. I once heard a speaker, a very famous man in this country who was supposed to give a speech on the atomic bomb. He started at say 8:05 without any notes, he made a speech covering the whole ground marvelously. And at 9:00 sharp, without any preparation but something in him, stopped. And it stopped at exactly the right time, the right moment. This kind of thing can be done as you see.

Now it took Socrates some time. "But when I observed that he had in fact finished," because it is unbelievable that this fountain should ever stop. And then he had to pull himself together and come back to reality. And then he said something. What did he say?

Student: "O son of Apollodorus, how deeply grateful I am to you for having brought me hither; I would not have missed the speech of Protagoras for a great deal."

Yes, so we are told again what we know already--that none other than the son of Apollodorus, Hippocrates, is responsible for the whole dialogue. The whole dialogue is for the sake of Hippocrates; to give him a somewhat better basis for judgment of whether it is wise to become a pupil of Protagoras. This implies as we have seen from other opportunities, that Socrates knows Protagoras a long time. But he did not yet know how Protagoras would handle such a situation, how he would talk with a view to Hippocrates or his like. And that was quite an experience.

And now the next point.

Student: "For I used to imagine that no human care could make men good; but I know better now."

Yes, "now I am convinced." Socrates has been charmed into believing that virtue is teachable; i.e. that virtue is of human origin. He shows that he has understood the myth perfectly. If you remember in the myth it was said that it was a gift of Zeus. That of course was merely mythical, a mythical expression for social pressure.

Socrates' previous view then was that virtue cannot be produced by human agencies and that means that it arises either by divine apportionment or by nature. But we have to think for one moment--is this truly the Socratic-Platonic teaching, you cannot separate the two conveniently, is there not another kind of virtue. I mean, is there not according to Socrates a kind of virtue that is produced by human agency? Well, some of you must know from former discussions.

Well, I read you one passage from the Tenth Book of Plato's Republic, 619b and c. The situation is how people after their deaths choose a lot for the next life.

"When the prophet has thus spoken, he said, when that the draw of the first lot at once prime to seize the greatest tyranny and that in his folly and greed he chose it without sufficient examination and failed to observe that it involved the fate of eating his own children and other horrors. And then when he inspected it at leisure he beat his breasts and bewailed his choice, not abiding by the forewarning of the prophet who had told him to be careful. For he did not blame himself for his woes, but fortune and the gods and anything except himself. He was one of those who had come down from heaven..."

In other words who had led a former life nobly.

"a man who had lived in a well ordered polity in his former life, participating in virtue by habit and not by philosophy."

There is a kind of virtue which is due entirely to habituation or to that social pressure of which Protagoras speaks, *genuine* without philosophy. ~~In Plato's strict view, genuine virtue is possible only on the basis of philosophy. He has another term for that occurring in the Phaedo, among other dialogues, vulgar virtue or political virtue--and that means the one that is brought about by social pressure, by threats of punishment or maybe also by the carrot, not only by the stick. That is not genuine virtue.~~

In Plato there is no moral virtue in the Aristotelian sense. This is, I think, crucial if one wants to understand Plato. What Aristotle calls moral virtue would be in between

the stick and carrot virtue spoken of by Plato and the true virtue which is possible only on the basis of philosophy. This "in-between," the virtue of the gentleman and the non-philosophic gentlemen does not exist in Plato. It is for Plato an unspeakable phenomenon, we can say, which has not the dignity which it has according to us. This is crucial.

So, in other words, what Protagoras says about virtue is not altogether wrong from Socrates or Plato's point of view. The error consists in the fact that he is silent about the other kinds of virtue. This I mention in passing. But that there is such a thing as a socially-induced virtue; meant in today's lingo by such terms as "well-adjusted" people for example. Well, the question is completely open as to what are you adjusted? For example if a child has the misfortune of being born in a house of ill-repute and cannot when he or she comes to some understanding "well-adjust" to this environment. This is a better child I would assume than a child who excellently adjusts. So if you speak of adjustment, one must always say adjustment to what. But within certain crude contexts, like those of psychiatry for example it may be sufficient to leave it simply at the question adjusted or not adjusted, a functioning cog or a nonfunctioning cog. But this is of course not sufficient for a deeper understanding of human affairs. Yes.

Student: Well, wouldn't the philosophic virtue be teachable as well?

But Socrates always denies that he teaches virtue. Well, we have enough to do to understand this provisional question which is discussed here--what about the crudest and lowest and in a way shoddy form of virtue which is of tremendous practical importance. Because when we speak ordinarily of nice people, perhaps including ourselves, we are not very strict. You know people who have never been to jail, never been before a law court, and some other things that is compatible with all kinds of deeper diseases as it is not hard to understand. Good.

So, at any rate, that is clear here. Socrates is convinced. He knows now that virtue is teachable. But the question is of course what virtue? We shall see. Yes.

Student: "Yet I have still one very small difficulty which I am sure that Protagoras will easily explain, as he has already explained so much."

Yes, "he will teach it fully and explain it fully, in addition to what he had done before." A man who has overcome such difficulty will be able to overcome this tiny

little wee bit. Yes.

Student: "If a man were to go and consult Pericles or any of our great speakers about these matters, he might perhaps hear as fine a discourse; but then when one has a question to ask of any of them, like books, they can neither answer nor ask; and if any one challenges the least particular of their speech, they go ringing on in a long harangue, like brazen pots, which when they are struck continue to sound unless some one puts his hand upon them:"

You see a Socrates' irony in the sense in which everyone observes it. Fundamentally, Socrates speaks always ironically in the strict sense, that he always speaks with a view to the individual or individuals to whom he speaks. That is the deepest meaning of irony in Plato's sense. But in the crude sense, normally when we say a person speaks ironically, he also does this from time to time and this is clear irony. Well, only one tiny little bit of a thing which proves to be fatal to the whole thing.

And secondly that he compels Protagoras, by flattering him, to give short replies. But in this flattery there is also a severe criticism. Your show-off speech which charmed me belongs to the kind of things which in a pinch even Pericles could have done. Rhetoric, public speech, books belong together; they all have this quality that they do not answer questions, answer new questions. But we must not forget that laws also are such writings which need the living human mind in order to become alive. So that laws too are proper. Yes.

Student: "whereas our friend Protagoras..."

"This Protagoras here," they were not so sentimental.

Student: "whereas Protagoras cannot only make a good long speech, as he has..."

No, "long and beautiful speech."

Student: "long and beautiful speech, as he has already shown, but when he is asked a question he can answer briefly; and when he asks he will wait and hear the answer; and this is a very rare gift."

Almost like "good doggie." Now just as Socrates compelled Protagoras to defend his orthodoxy by warning him that the Athenians might be different, he now compels him to defend

his reputation as a short answerer by giving short answers. And you will see that Protagoras will not merely answer questions but he will also raise questions, namely in case Socrates' questions were not clear enough he will ask for the meaning and so on. Yes.

Student: "Now I, Protagoras, want to ask you a little question, which if you will only answer, I shall be quite satisfied. You were saying that virtue can be taught;--that I will take upon your authority, and there is no one to whom I am more ready to trust."

"If I ever would believe any human being, I would believe you." So you see now Socrates makes quite clear, contrary to what he had said in 328e, that Protagoras has not convinced him of the teachability of virtue. And he has not convinced him we can assume because of that little point which he will bring up now. Yes.

Student: "But I marvel at one thing about which I should like to have my mind set at rest. You were speaking of Zeus sending justice and reverence to men; and several times while you were speaking,...

"And also many times in the speeches," this implies, this means that what he said about Zeus was not said in the speeches but in the myth. The reference to the difference is important.

Student: "justice, and moderation, and piety, and all these qualities, were described by you as if together they made up virtue. Now I want you to tell me truly whether virtue is one whole, of which justice and moderation and piety are parts; or whether all these are only the names of one and the same thing: that is the doubt which still lingers in my mind."

Now he alludes here at the beginning of this passage to Protagoras' admission in the myth that virtue is of divine origin--that Zeus sent these things, not due to human agency. He reminds us of the difference between the myth and the logos. In these logos, and not in the myth, Protagoras had spoken of virtue as one quite a few times.

Now the little point which he has is this: is virtue simply one or does it have parts? Why is this such a terribly important question for reasonably sensible men? I mean we must not on the basis of what we know from other Platonic dialogues nor from histories of philosophy give an answer to that question. That would be absurd. We must consider the situation

in which everyone present is. Would this be the greatest difficulty for anyone who had heard this Protagoras speech?

To make the difficulty quite clear I will use an extreme expression. I will say that the question of the unity of virtue is at this point a kind of red herring; but nevertheless the question of the unity of virtue is "the" question in an entirely different way as Socrates states it here. We all must have been impressed by the fact that Protagoras spoke almost all the time of virtue in at least two very different senses--the virtue expected of every human being man or woman, adult or child, freeman or slave, and on the other hand of the virtue like that of Pericles, the virtue of the great statesman. Well, if we are more precise we would say there is still an even higher kind of virtue which came to sight for one moment--the virtue of the legislators of old, which is still greater than that of Pericles. Now are these all, is this the same virtue or are these different virtues?

Needless to say there is this link up with the question of the rich and the poor also. Are the rich capable of a kind of virtue of which the poor are not capable? Or, more importantly, are the gifted ones capable of virtues of which the ungifted ones are not capable? This is the most obvious question when one reads this speech, the long speech. And that is indeed the question of the unity of virtue. Does virtue in the case of every human being mean the same or are there various levels or kinds of virtue?

Socrates, for reasons which we can perhaps find out, takes the question of the unity of virtue but understands it in this precise sense: are, for example, justice and piety identical or non-identical? And that will be the subject of the sequel.

Plato's Protagoras, A Course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science at the
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Where is our reader? Who will take his place? Well, let us hope he will come while I make my introductory remarks. Here he is, very good.

Well, you remember the point--only one little difficulty and Socrates is willing to believe Protagoras that virtue can be taught. And one can put the question very simply: you have proven that virtue is taught without making clear what virtue is; the same situation as at the end of the First Book of the Republic where Socrates had proven justice is good without having made clear what justice is. Now the question is not put quite in this technical point, what is justice but rather this way, is justice one as Protagoras said more than once, or is it many--because he has spoken of justice, saintliness, and moderation. And which is the right view Socrates asks. And we come now, if you are ready, to 329d. "But it is easy says Protagoras to answer this question at any rate." In other words there may be questions which will be harder to answer.

Student: "There is no difficulty, Socrates, in answering that the qualities of which you are speaking are the parts of virtue which is one."

Yes, now Protagoras is in a way relieved; this at any rate is easy to answer. That Socrates has not brought into the open the much greater question to which I referred at the end of last meeting, namely regarding the ambiguity of virtue in his own speech, is it the virtue that can be expected of every human being or is it this high-class virtue of which there are various kinds? It is an easy question and therefore the answer is easy. Now how does he go on?

Student: "And are they parts, I said, in the same sense in which mouth, nose, and eyes, and ears, are the parts of a face; or are they like parts of gold, which differ from the whole and from one another only in being larger or smaller?"

I should say that they differed, Socrates, in the first way; they are related to one another as the parts of a face are related to the whole face.

And do men have some one part and some another part of virtue? Or if a man has one part, must he also have all the others?"

Now let us stop here. Now the question is parts in what sense; like the parts of a face or like the parts of gold, parts qualitatively from one another and the whole or parts only quantitatively different. Protagoras says, like the parts

of the face. But this, of course, has a great difficulty which is not brought out by him or by anybody else. If the parts of virtue are related to virtue as such as the parts of the face are related to the face, what difficulty arises immediately?

Student: There is no overriding virtue then. What is "the" virtue?

Yes, but more simply; is the nose a face? So, in other words, if he is right the parts of virtue are not virtue but only altogether.

So now if only all virtues together, only all so-called virtues altogether, are virtue then of course it follows that virtue is not taught by the Athenians nor by Protagoras; because Protagoras argues on the opposite assumption, as we shall see. The alternative view is incompatible--namely that they should be only quantitatively different--with what we mean by the difference of the virtues. We do not mean that courage is the same, only quantitatively different, from wisdom or something. At any rate, from Protagoras' reply it would follow that one must have all virtues together--a face without a nose or without eyes is not a face.

Socrates omits here a third possibility which he discusses for example in the Statesman; namely, that part in the sense of species as part of a genus. For example, let us say that virtues might be related to each other like various geometrical figures, circles, rectangles and so on. And in this case it would be impossible that they could be there at the same time. Still, Socrates limits the alternatives in such a way as to bring Protagoras into a great difficulty. Because, to repeat, if Protagoras' view is right that the parts of virtue are related to each other like the parts of the face, then one must have all of them together. It is impossible to have only some of them; because a face without a mouth or any of the other four parts is not a face or is only a very defective one and therefore it couldn't be virtue. Good.

He mentions here...this kind of thing never come out in the translation when he speaks of the parts of the face, mouth and nose are taken together. So, literally translated mouth as well as nose and eyes and ears. So there are three really just as we have three virtues. And one can explain it at least in this sense that the eyes then corresponding to the moderation which is the central virtue mentioned here. Moderation as defined in this dialogue here has to do with harmony, rhythm and this kind of thing. The ears would correspond to piety and that is clear because piety as he understood rests on tradition i.e. on what you hear, on what people say. In which sense mouth and nose would correspond to justice is a relatively minor question. Good.

Now what does Protagoras say?

Student: "By no means, he said; for many a man is courageous and not just, or just and not wise."

Yes, and this is a very popular view and in itself this is a statement of triviality. We note in passing that Protagoras does not say, the other way around, there might be wise men who are unjust because this would come too close to home as you will see from the sequel.

Yes, and now?

Student: "You would not deny, then, I replied, that courage and wisdom are also parts of virtue?"

This is not right. "These too parts of virtue, wisdom and courage," because he never mentioned them before--that is the point. Hitherto he had only spoken of the three others. Yes, what does he say?

Student: "Most certainly they are, he answered; and wisdom is the noblest of the parts."

So, in other words he had forgotten the most important and also another one, which is by no means unimportant but which is courage or manliness. Now in order to give the most telling truth, of the truth of his view that the virtues can be possessed separately, he suddenly remembers the two virtues about which he had been completely silent in his long speech. Why had he been silent about them? Because he was speaking there of that kind of virtue which is expected of everyone, men and women, for example, of whom manliness in any degree is not expected according to the popular view. So we have to say that there are two kinds of virtue--the kinds mentioned in the long speech, justice moderation and piety, and the other kind is manliness and wisdom. This is a view of some importance. For example, Callicles in the Gorgias--the virtues which he praises and which he regards as genuine virtues are only manliness and wisdom, not the other virtues. And this culminates, so to speak, in Machiavelli's teaching. Machiavelli makes a distinction between goodness and virtue. And goodness is exactly the things which Protagoras had meant in his long speech whereas virtue in Machiavelli's usage means manliness and wisdom combined. Incidentally, Rousseau makes the same distinction between virtue and goodness but it has a very different meaning.

Now, this is an old story, for example Cicero in the Offices, Book I, paragraph 20, says men are called good with a view to their justice, not with a view to the other virtues. But the most striking illustration is one which is so obvious that you don't think of it and that is supplied

by Plato's Republic. You know what I mean? Yes?

Student: I believe that all men have to share in justice...

And in moderation, yes?

Student: Right, and in moderation. But then just one class has courage and just the one man would have wisdom.

Yes, so as ~~wisdom~~ and courage are the preserves of the higher groups, these are the ones which I expected of everybody.

Protagoras, as we will see from his answer, thinks very highly of the two forgotten virtues, especially of wisdom. So the various virtues differ from one another not only qualitatively, but also in rank. Wisdom is here and the others are much lower. And it is, of course, implied in what he said that one can be a wise man, although he does not state it, without being just, moderate, pious, and courageous. That will become quite clear from the immediate sequel. Yes.

Student: "And they are all different from one another? I said.
Yes."

So that means that they are separable. That is the point. Yes.

Student: "And has each of them a distinct function like the parts of the face;"

Yes, function, well, "power" is more literal. Function is a modern term. "Power, faculty." Yes, all right.
Each is capable to achieve something special.

Student: "--the eye, for example, is not like the ear, and has not the same faculty;"

"Power." The eye provides the power for seeing and the ear provides the power for hearing. And the same would apply to the virtues. Yes.

Student: "and the other parts are none of them like one another, either in their powers, or in any other way? I want to know whether the comparison holds concerning the parts of virtue. Do they also differ from one another in themselves and in their powers? For that is clearly what the simile would imply."

Yes, but it is "comparison."

Student: "For that is clearly what the comparison implies. Yes, Socrates, you are right in supposing that they differ."

Now let us think for one moment about that. Could the different virtues possibly have the same power? Because why does he make this addition of the powers? For instance, moderation could have the same power as justice. I mean if someone has very small needs and is in no way competitive, that would be implied in moderation in a certain sense, he would act like the just man but not as the just man. Because the just man would do it for other reasons, the common good. One or the other virtue may therefore be superfluous for people who have a certain other virtue. That is implied. If another virtue can fulfill, well, had this power... Now?

Student: "Then, I said, no other part of virtue is like knowledge, or like justice, or like courage, or like temperance, or like holiness? No, he answered."

Yeah, now he enumerates here five virtues, as you see, because the number has been enlarged by Protagoras by adding the two. And you see what he does here; which is the central virtue?

Student: Courage.

Courage, yes. You will see that this will become easily intelligible because in the following discussion courage will not be taken up. But courage becomes the theme toward the end. And he replaces wisdom by knowledge or by the word which is the origin for our word science.

One can, of course, count differently and say there are two new virtues here added--knowledge and courage--and in between them is justice. They surround justice. And this is more helpful for understanding the immediate sequel.

Yes, so this is perfectly clear. There are five independent virtues and a man can possess one or two or all of them without possessing the other ones--there is no difference.

Now the argument begins. Are the virtues truly ?

Student: "Well, then, I said, suppose that you and I inquire into the particular nature of each. And first, you would agree with me that justice is some particular thing, is it not?"

No, that is not right. "Justice is some thing or is it no thing?" meaning of necessity a tangible thing but also an affair, an affair, as we say res publica, the common

affairs, or the things like chair or something of this kind.
Let us read, yes.

Student: "That is my opinion: would it not also be yours?
Mine also, he said."

Yes, but still, justice is a thing. Well, what else could it be? Why does he...

Student: Because there would be no such thing as justice.

But what would it be then?

Student: It would be a fiction by which you could persuade people to be just.

But still it would be something or else you couldn't even make this remark.

Student: Well, when we think of justice we think of it as something good...

Well, if we read on a few lines we would see the answer. It could be a mere name, that is the opposite here. Is justice a thing or is it a mere name? That comes out in the sequel.

You see also what Socrates does here. He, as it were, dictates the answers to Protagoras. He says, that is my opinion, what about yours? Now why does he do this? Ordinarily Socrates does not do that. But we are not in an ordinary situation. Why do we engage in this whole business here?

Student: I suppose he doesn't want Protagoras to make a silly mistake that would require Socrates to correct to keep up the progress of the argument.

Yes, but something very simple; what is the peculiar situation in this dialogue which we do not have in the same way elsewhere?

Student: You mean Hippocrates?

Hippocrates, sure, he must be prevented from carrying away in his soul unhealthy food. And therefore Socrates interferes much more than he otherwise would. Good. Yes.

Student: "And suppose that some one were to ask us, saying, O Protagoras, and you, Socrates, what about this thing which you were calling justice, is it just or unjust?"

Yes, "which you have just named." So, the contrast to

name is quite clear.

Student: "You just named justice, is it just or unjust?"

Now we see here again another dialogue within the dialogue by which Socrates achieves that he is in the same boat as Protagoras. He also is cross-examined, but, here, of course, the third party which addresses both of them through the mouth of Socrates is also a warner. Because that has to do with the subject under discussion as we will gradually see. Because the subject will be justice and piety and Protagoras was not very sound in this. Yes, good. Now let us go on.

Student: You use piety as the translation?

Yes, well, since he uses all the time I think we can translate it here in this context as we like because there is no difference here intended between and . He translates it by saintliness which, of course, is a bit too much because by saintliness we understand a high degree of piety.

Student: Or holiness.

Well, holiness would also be...well, a man is pious in the ordinary sense if he fulfills his religious obligation. He does it by this very fact, I mean, it is expected of everyone. He would not, by doing this, become saintly or holy. So we can here translate it as we want because the question does not come up.

Student: "is it just or unjust?--and I were to answer, just: would you vote with me or against me?"

We see again how he guides him. Yes.

Student: "With you, he said.
Thereupon I should answer to him who asked me, that justice is of the nature of the just: would not you?"

Yes, well, no, more simply. "Justice is something like being just," and therefore how should not justice be just?
Yes.

Student: "Yes, he said.
And suppose that he went on to say: Well, now, is there also such a thing as piety?"

Well, literally, "is there not some sort of piety?"

Student: "some sort of piety?--we should answer, 'Yes,' if

I am not mistaken?

Yes, he said.

Which you would also acknowledge to be a thing--
should we not say so?

He assented."

Now the question of piety is slightly more elaborate
than the question regarding justice as you see. Yes.

Student: "And is this sort of thing which is pious or impious?"

No, now before, let me say: "You say that this is also
a thing, affirmative, or not?" And then how does he go on

Student: "He assented."

You see, Socrates suddenly drops here the direct speech
and falls into indirect speech. A tiny little change which
is very meaningful as will appear later.

Well, very simply, how could he have expressed his
agreement? There are many ways you can agree, you can say
Yes, Of course, and so on and so on but you can also just
nod or express your agreement by any other silent sign. This
we do not know. Good. Yes.

Student: "I should be angry at his putting such a question,
and should say, 'Peace man; nothing can be...'

More than that, "use decent language."

Student: Bite your tongue?

Well, yes.

Student: "nothing can be pious if piety is not pious" What
would you say? Would you not answer in the same way?
Certainly, he said."

Yes, good. So, it is not clear whether Protagoras, in
contradistinction to Socrates, would have become indignant.
It is very rare that Socrates becomes indignant or at least
says I would be indignant. But otherwise there is perfect
agreement between the two men; justice is just, piety is
pious. What these seemingly trivial things mean will become
a bit clearer from the sequel. Yes.

Student: "And then after this suppose that he came and asked
us, 'What were you saying just now? Perhaps I may
not have heard you rightly, but you seemed to me to
be saying that the parts of virtue in their mutual

relation were not the same as one another.' I should reply, 'You certainly heard that said, but not, as you imagine, by me; for I only asked the question; Protagoras gave the answer.' And suppose that he turned to you and said, 'Is this true, Protagoras? and do you maintain that one part of virtue is unlike another, and is this your position?' --how would you answer him?
I could not help acknowledging the truth of what he said, Socrates."

Yes, now, Socrates, in other words, finishes the situation where they are both in the same boat. He emphasizes the disagreement in spite of the agreement which was emphasized before. Yes. Protagoras has now to defend the thesis that while justice is just, it isn't pious; and while piety is pious, it isn't just. You see that these verbal things are full of, rich in nonverbal meanings.

You will not know that for Protagoras piety was a very questionable thing. He began a book with the words, "whether the gods are, or are not, I do not know; the abstruseness of the subject and the brevity of my life (he lived until he was almost seventy) prevent me from knowing the truth about it." And the book was burned then in Athens and he was expelled because of his impiety. So this is of course known to Plato when he wrote that, even if it wasn't known to Socrates at the time of this discussion. Yes.

Student: "Well, then, Protagoras, we will assume this; and now supposing that he proceeded to say further, 'Then piety is not of...

Yes, "if he were to ask us," you see Socrates does not completely sever his relation with Protagoras. "If he were to ask us, in addition..." Yes.

Student: "'Then piety is not of the nature of justice, nor justice of the nature of piety, but of the nature of impiety; and piety is of the nature of the not just, and therefore of the unjust, and the unjust is the impious'; how shall we answer him? I should certainly answer him on my own behalf that justice is pious, and that piety is just; and I would say in like manner on your behalf, also, if you would allow me, that justice is either the same with piety, or very nearly the same; and above all I would assert that justice is like piety and piety is like justice; and I wish that you would tell me whether I may be permitted to give this answer on your behalf, and...

Yes, you see he tries to build a golden bridge for

Protagoras. Socrates would say that justice is pious and piety is just which would not necessarily mean that justice is identical with piety. For instance, a man may be pious in the sense of worshipping the gods by being just but also by sacrificing and praying, which are not implied in justice. And it may also be that one is just by giving every being its due and hence by worshipping the gods, here piety would appear as a subdivision of justice; but a subdivision of something is of course not the same as it.

Now his proposal to Protagoras also leaves open the possibility that the two virtues are not identical--he says they may be only very similar. Now you must have observed the fallacious conclusion of Socrates; if justice is not pious, it is impious and visa versa, piety would be unjust. Still, we must not forget in this discussion one crucial distinction which comes out more clearly in the Platonic dialogue Euthyphro, two meanings of piety--doing what the gods tell men to do through priests, oracles, etc. and doing what the gods do, i.e. imitating the gods. Now the latter would mean to imitate Zeus' adulteries; so here it is clear that justice and piety would be very different. So this question is a very great question.

So, Socrates has offered Protagoras a fine way out. Now let us see what Protagoras in his wisdom chooses. Yes.

Student: "He replied, this matter does not seem to be so simple Socrates that I can agree to the proposition that justice is pious and that piety is just, for there appears to me to be a difference between them."

A very wise answer, as I believe I have shown; because the point of view would be different in any case. Socrates' proposal goes too far for Protagoras. The difference between piety and justice is such to preclude saying that justice is pious and piety is just; that cannot be said. Now how does he go on, Protagoras?

Student: "But what the matter? if you please I please; and let us assume, if you will, that justice is pious, and that piety is just."

In other words, the matter is not important enough to quarrel about. Have it your way Socrates. But that is not what Socrates wishes as we see from the sequel.

Student: "Pardon me, I replied; I do not want this 'if you please' or 'if you like' sort of proposition to be put to the test, but I want you and me to be tested: I mean to say that the proposition will be best tested if you take the 'if' out of it."

So, in other words, Socrates demands that Protagoras speak up, that he identify himself with the thesis, with the logos. We shall see later on that Socrates is not of the opinion*that one cannot discuss a thesis even if the man who maintains it does not believe in it, of course that is possible. But Socrates has to think of something else here, of somebody else,--our young friend Hippocrates. Hippocrates must know somehow where Protagoras stands and therefore it is important to know what Protagoras says and not merely which thesis he maintains for argument's sake. Yes?

Student: "Well, he said, I admit that justice bears a resemblance to piety, for there is always some point of view in which everything is like every other thing; white is in a certain way like black, and hard is like soft, and the most extreme opposites have some qualities in common; even the parts of the face which, as we were saying before, are distinct and have different powers, are still in a certain point of view similar, and one of them is like another of them. And you may prove, if you please in the same principle, that all things are like one another; and yet things which are alike in some particular ought not to be called alike,...

More literally, "it is not just to call things which have some similarity the same nor those which have some dissimilarity dissimilar when the similarity is only very small."

Now you see Protagoras accepts here Socrates' identification of justice and piety in the sense that they have a certain similarity; but, he adds, even the most opposite things have a certain similarity--black and white are similar, they are colors. Now the implication; the similarity between justice and piety could be negligibly small for all practical purposes and they still would have something in common because they are praised. Surely this statement is astonishing as Socrates says in the sequel. A man may be pious without being just and a man may be just without being pious; this surely follows from Protagoras' general assertion. Now this somewhat difficult passage read at the end of the passage--"one must not call dissimilar things (like justice and piety) dissimilar if they have some resemblance however small." Now what does Socrates say? "And I having fallen into wonder...yes."

Student: "And do you think, I said in a tone of surprise, that..."

No, not "a tone" that is wrong. It says here simply that he presents himself as genuinely surprised.

Student: "And I, having fallen into wonder said, do you think that justice and piety have but a small degree of likeness?

Certainly not; any more than I agree with what I understand to be your view."

In other words, there is some similarity but not such a great one as you say nor are they very dissimilar. Yes.

Student: "Well, I said, as you appear to be unhappy with this, let us take another of the examples which you mentioned instead."

Yes, good, good. Protagoras obviously doesn't like the discussion of the subject, which should be clear, of the difference between justice and piety; and Socrates being an obliging man drops the subject. Protagoras' caution of which he spoke when he spoke of his candor is obviously not good enough; because at the first test he is not cautious enough.

Yes, now this was the discussion of piety and justice and nothing has been proven about their identity; the utmost is that they have some similarity that is some resemblance which, of course, means that they are not identical. Yes?

Student: Could not Protagoras have agreed with what Socrates said and still maintain that there is a similarity but that they're not the same? Socrates said that justice is pious, he did not say justice is piety. And the reverse...

Yes, but that would mean that if justice is pious, by complying with the requirements of piety you are just.

Student: Pious would fall into that description but it would not be piety.

Yes, that is clear but the question would be was one worshipping the gods. In other words it could mean that by acting justly toward other human beings we do the will of the gods, that is piety, but then there is this other subject of sacrificing and praying. I spoke of that, that the point of view of piety is not the point of view of justice. But this would be compatible, that the subject matter is the same in both cases. But it could be because worshipping the gods could simply be an act of gratitude toward the gods, and gratitude falls under the heading of justice, so that could be. But this is ^{not} of course what Protagoras has in mind, in other words, the private notions between justice and piety generally feel that the reasons of justice is more evident than the reasons of piety. Yes?

Student: Protagoras is one of the most famous of the nationally famous sophists and Socrates at the very most is a local notable. Why does Protagoras let Socrates initiate and lead the discussion when he doesn't like the conversation at that point why doesn't he stop it and appeal to the crowd and not Socrates?

But, still, he has no idea what serpents he has to deal with, I mean, he knows that Socrates is a very clever young man but that he could lick him. It never occurred to him and hitherto he had annoyed him a bit but he can always take care of him. More is needed; Protagoras doesn't know what sort of a fellow Socrates is. Of course, he cannot easily jump out, he has to think of his reputation; he must not, by jumping out at the improper place, damage his reputation. Here is a boy Hippocrates with lots of money who wants to become his student, you know, without the presence of Hippocrates we cannot understand the dialogue on the highest and on the lowest level.

So, Socrates leaves it off here and everyone can draw his own conclusion what Protagoras thinks about piety. But now he turns to another subject where we left off.

Student: "Do you admit the existence of folly?"

I do.

And is not wisdom the very opposite of folly?

That is true, he said.

And when men act rightly and advantageously...

Now wait one moment. Now a new subject begins. I think I should draw the plan: [He goes to the blackboard.] The virtues, yes, he mentions piety, justice. Now hitherto it is proven in a way that piety is identical with justice. Now we come to wisdom and moderation; and he proves that they are identical. And then he turns to moderation and proves it is identical with justice. And then of course this goes back where we began with justice. Well, of course, they, all four are identical. The only one which is dropped here for the time being is courage and we will see later why this is the case.

Now this is one and this would be perfectly compatible, the second stage, with the fact that piety and justice are identical but have nothing in common with wisdom and moderation. And then in only the last stage are these two united. That is Socrates plan.

Now there is one difficulty here and that has to do with the term that I translate as moderation, , which has a very large, great range of meaning. And I suggest that for our present purpose we translate it by something like "being sensible." You can see that moderation can be said to be "being sensible." I mean this is easily understood,

for example, be sensible, don't drink too much and so on. But, of course, it is not quite the same as wisdom because in the case of wisdom, we think also of theoretical wisdom, of great abilities and this kind of thing. But we cannot follow this somewhat sophisticated argument of Socrates if we do not translate properly. So, I would put it this way "is there such a thing as senselessness?" And its opposite is wisdom. The senseless men are the lowest and the wise men are at the top. Good. Now, where were we?

Now when men act correctly as well as...

Student: "they seem to you to be sensible?"

Or "to act sensibly."

Student: "Yes, he said.

And being sensible makes them sensible?

Certainly.

And they who do not act rightly act foolishly,
and in acting thus are not sensible?

I agree, he said.

Then to act foolishly is the opposite of acting
sensible?"

Yes, "To act senselessly is the opposite..." So, by acting correctly and usefully, men act sensibly; hence, if acting justly and piously is acting correctly and usefully, it would follow that justice and piety are forms of being sensible. Is this not obvious?

In other words, here is the first time that we get something more than the merely verbal because acting sensibly is now said to be acting correctly and usefully. Here we get a somewhat more complete notion. Yes?

You must also see here the transition to indirect speech that Socrates does no longer report Protagoras literally said but he says he agreed and which I said could mean silent nodding or some other expression on the face without any words. Good. Now go on.

Student: "He assented.

And senseless actions are done by senselessness,
and sensible actions by sensibleness?

He agreed.

And that is done strongly which is done by strength,
and that which is weakly done, by weakness?

He assented.

And that which is done with swiftness is done
swiftly, and that which is done with slowness,
slowly?

He assented again."

Yes, now in other words he uses now these examples: senselessness and sensibility are opposites of the same character as, say, quickness and slowness, as strength and weakness. Now if you take this literally, the comparison of sensibility with slowness. In the dialogue Charmides, the first definition of sensibility, or moderation, we may call it, is acting slowly, you know, not rashly. Now that's the great implication that there are also co-ordinated also co-ordinated with weakness, in contradistinction to strength.

Now let us see if Socrates - of Protagoras by that.

Student: "And that which is done in the same way, is done by the same; and that which is done in an opposite way by the opposite?"

He agreed.

Once more, I said, is there anything beautiful?

Yes.

To which the only opposite is the ugly?

There is no other.

And is there anything good?

There is.

To which the only opposite is the evil?

There is no other.

And there is the high in tone?

True.

To which the only opposite is the low?

There is no other, he said, but that.

Then every opposite has one opposite only and no more?

He assented."

Yes, you see now he speaks explicitly of the beautiful or noble and the good, about which he had been silent in the discussion of piety and justice.

Now we have here altogether five examples: strength, weakness, the beautiful or noble, the good and the shrill. The noble is in the center and is here taken to be different from the good, otherwise it wouldn't make sense to say the noble and the opposite is the base, the good and the opposite is the bad. But if there is such a fundamental distinction between the noble or beautiful and the good, there might be a variety of virtues on that very basis; virtue as related to the noble and virtue as related to the good. We must keep this in mind.

The main point is that everything which has opposites has only one opposite. The whole argument hinges on this principle. Now is this a true principle? Protagoras accepts it. Yes?

Student: Well, say, take an example that he uses, something which is not noble is the base would be totally different from nobility. So couldn't you say that the opposite of nobility is the base and is also anything which is not noble?

The logicians distinguish between the contrary and the contradictory--for the good the contrary is the bad, the contradictory is the non-good which may be something different. Yes? That is one way of settling that.

But one could also say is it true of the humanly relevant things that there is only one opposite?

Student: Each extreme is the opposite of the other but rashness is also the opposite of courage as well as the opposite of....

What you say is very right except that if we go back.

Student: I was thinking of fall quarter.

Yes, but you cannot suppose that these people who listened to that had read the Ethics. But the question is whether Plato himself did not recognize, let us say, foolhardiness as an opposite of courage as well as cowardice. And he does this and we can prove this so this is not a necessary principle. Yes?

Student: If however there were such a one as virtue then each person would participate in this virtue or he would not, and this would be either a yes or a no.

Give an example, I don't follow you.

Student: I think Socrates is saying here there is one thing, that virtue is one reality, in which one cannot be moderate without being wise or being just, because it all refers to one reality.

He tries to establish that. To begin with he means something different by moderation and by wisdom. And Socrates tries to prove that they are identical. The argument is roughly this: folly or senselessness, as I said, is an opposite of wisdom but it is also the opposite of moderation. But one opposite can have only one opposite, hence, moderation must be identical with wisdom. That is the argument, which is based on a number of difficulties. Now let us first read the sequel.

Student: "Then now, I said, let us recapitulate our admissions."

For we are already through. Yes.

Student: "Then now, I said, let us recapitulate our admissions.
First of all we admitted that everything has one
opposite and not more than one?

We did so.

And we admitted also that what was done in opposite
ways was done by opposites?

Yes.

And that which was done senselessly, as we further
admitted, was done in the opposite way to that
which was done sensibly?

Yes.

And that which was done sensibly was done by
sensibility, and that which was done senselessly
by senselessness?

He agreed.

And that which is done in opposite ways is done by
opposites?

Yes.

And one thing is done by sensibility, and quite
another thing by senselessness?

Yes. And in opposite ways?

Certainly.

And therefore by opposites:--then senselessness is
the opposite of sensibility?

Clearly.

And do you remember that senselessness has already
been acknowledged by us to be the opposite of
wisdom?

He assented."

He doesn't give Protagoras' answer because he is silent
apparently now. Yes.

Student: Well, senselessness is the opposite of many things,
not just one thing, but several things here isn't
that what he is saying?

No, what he is trying to show is, on the contrary,
that senselessness is the opposite of wisdom--senselessness
is the opposite of being sensible--but one opposite can have
only one other opposite; hence, wisdom must be identical
with sensibility. But we must first read this through. Yes.

Student: "And we said that everything has only one opposite?
Yes.

Then, Protagoras, which of the two assertions shall we renounce? One says that everything has but one opposite; the other that wisdom is distinct from sensibility, and that both of them are parts of virtue; and that they are not only distinct, but dissimilar, both in themselves and in their powers, like the parts of a face. Which of these two assertions shall we renounce? For both of them together are certainly not in harmony; they do not accord or agree: for how can they be said to agree if everything can have only one opposite and not more than one, and yet senselessness, which is one, has clearly the two opposites--wisdom and sensibility? Is not that true, Protagoras? What else would you say? He assented, but with great reluctance. Then sensibility and wisdom are the same, as before justice and piety appeared to us to be nearly the same."

So, in other words, we have already made great headway in proving their identity. Now let us consider that.

The argument is very simple: there are two contradictory assumptions, first that moderation or sensibility is different from wisdom; and the other that one thing has only one opposite. Let us not go into any details but what follows? Assuming that this is a fair analysis of the situation, what follows from that? Well, we have proved contradictory assumptions. Yes?

Student: Well, both can't be true, but either one can be true.

And what does Socrates do?

Student: Well, he says, which shall we give up, and picks one.

In other words, Socrates picks arbitrarily one of the two. And, of course, either you are a nice man and have respect for Socrates' wisdom and say, that has to be or you are nasty and critical and ask for reasons. And that is the question.

Protagoras' opposition in this section was here less marked than when we discussed piety and justice. The identification of wisdom and moderation is not as repulsive to him as the identification of justice and piety.

Clearly, Protagoras is caught with the contradiction and he is unable to extricate himself from it. Now this is of course of the utmost importance because he who claims to teach virtue is shown not to know what virtue is. He is compromised in the eyes of Hippocrates who may not understand any fallacy but sees that this great personality is embarrassed or not

embarrassed because no great profundity of understanding is required for observing such things. Good. So, Socrates has done quite a bit to prevent any harmful influence of Protagoras on Hippocrates.

Student: Well, pretty much everything, all the elements of the trap are ready for Socrates says then we admit something can have only one opposite and Protagoras must have seen what was intended.

Apparently not, apparently not, that was not his fortune to foresee this kind of thing. Of course, he could very well have said this, you don't make clear what you understand by moderation. I understand by moderation, in the first place, self control regarding food, drink, and sex and I don't see any impossibility for a man being wise and at the same time lack moderation. I mean there are mathematicians and physicists and what-not who are not outstanding in self-control in these matters. But, you see, just as Gorgias in the Gorgias, he is under kind of a compulsion to give short answers in order to show that he is very good not only at long speeches but at short speeches as well. This is a comedy here, a part of the comedy.

Student: I am still quite unhappy with Protagoras in not giving up the logical branch of the dilemma, the one opposite principle. Why does he lose less face by giving up on the thesis he is maintaining instead of this rash inductive assumption.

You mean regarding the one opposite?

Student: Yes.

Well, you must not forget that Protagoras is a man filled with the sense of his own importance and this is a very dangerous thing, especially if you have to do with a man who lacks it. Well, take a very big dog and a very small puppy who barks at him. He doesn't take that so very seriously, only when the small puppy proves to be a very good fighter. Now similar situations arise among human beings and Protagoras has not yet awakened to this situation; when he does he will act and hit back, as we shall see. So, good.

Now, where were we now? Now we come to the next point.

Student: "And now, Protagoras, I said, we must finish the enquiry, and not give up."

Yes, "let us not get tired," "let us not get lazy," yes, "but consider also the remaining things."

Student: "Do you think that an unjust man can be moderate..."

No, "can be sensible," "can act sensibly." He uses here the word for human being in general, making us wonder whether an may act sensibly by acting unjustly. But this is, of course, not elaborated. Good.

Student: "Do you think that an unjust man can be sensible in his injustice?"

I should be ashamed, Socrates, he said to acknowledge this, which nevertheless many may be found to assert. And shall I argue with them or with you? I replied. I would rather, he said, that you should argue with the many first, if you will. It makes no difference to me, if you will only answer me...

Yes, well, let us stop here for the moment. Now Protagoras does not deny that injustice and moderation, or whatever you call it, can go together nor does he assert it; you see, because to be ashamed to say it does not mean to deny it. Now Socrates puts a choice before Protagoras (this is very strange here)--which thesis shall I discuss, the thesis of the many which says you can be unjust and moderate at the same time or Protagoras' shameful view, shamefaced view that they cannot go together. Now Socrates would have questioned the thesis that justice and moderation are inseparable if Protagoras had asserted it; "against which of the two assertions shall I speak?" This is not extraordinary. So little is Socrates concerned with simply getting Protagoras to agree to his thesis of the unity of the virtues; his concern is rather with testing Protagoras. It can be done either way, and that in the immediate sequel.

Student: "It makes no difference to me, if you will only answer me and say whether you are of their opinion or not. My object is to test the validity of the argument; and yet the result may be that I who ask and the respondent will both be tested."

You see the delicacy of Socrates. He does not say, "I who ask and you the respondent," he omits the you. Socrates no longer demands that Protagoras identify himself with the logos, the assertion to be examined, as he did in 331c. It is clear enough now where Protagoras stands on the present issue. Of course, it is clear that he thinks that you can be unjust while sensible. Only simple shame prevents him from saying so

Protagoras is again confronted with a choice here, as twice before. This time he seems to choose wisely, for by disagreeing with the common view, the popular view, he would

concede defeat. If he were to grant that justice and moderation are inseparable, he would just say that Socrates is right would he not? He must at least continue the fight; is this not clear? In one point he was licked clearly, in the other he was almost licked; now, if he would now say, you cannot be just without being moderate, he would admit it in a third case and that would be the end of it. But he wishes to continue the fight because there is still some fight left in him. Now let us see.

Student: "Protagoras at first played coy, as he said that the argument was not encouraging;"
is greater

You see, his resistance now, than his resistance had ever been before. What is at issue, to which he is so resistant?

Student: Is it sensible to be unjust.

But we get a more precise admission.

Student: "at length, he consented to answer.
Now then, I said, begin at the beginning and answer me. You think that some men are sensible, and yet unjust?
Yes, he said; let that be admitted."

Yes, all right, because he does not identify himself with that.

Student: "And sensibility is good sense?
Yes.
And good sense is good counsel in doing injustice?
Granted.
If they do well, I said, or if they do not do well?
If they do well.
And you would admit the existence of good?"

"And there are some goods," yes. Now let us stop here for one moment. Now what is the issue? The issue is whether one can do well by committing unjust acts. Well, if we use our own sense and use the word doing well in the common sense of the word, meaning getting rich, having a yacht and all the other paraphernalia, by committing unjust acts there is some evidence for that. So, in other words, this is a great problem of Callicles also in the Gorgias.

Protagoras admits that being good at counseling may lead to injustice. What may I ask is he doing to his pupils? He is teaching good counsel, being well-advised. Now if this is so, he is manifestly a teacher of injustice; not necessarily only of injustice, in some cases he would of course advise justice, but also or injustice.

Now these good things with which well-advisedness is concerned belongs to the essence of moderation as here understood and hence, also of wisdom--because wisdom and moderation have been identified. A wise man, in the loose sense of the word, is a man who can take care of his own interest by picking what is good for him and avoiding what is bad for him. These considerations were absent in the discussion of justice and piety. This will come out later on, but, it is important. Now?

Student: "And you would admit there are good things?

Yes.

And is the good that which is advantageous for man?

Yes, by Zeus, he said:"

Yes, now this is good that you bring out the oath because that is a very rare occurrence in this dialogue. It is the first oath after the Hippocrates scene where Hippocrates had sworn five times and Socrates twice. But in the whole of what happened since, not one oath. Now when do people swear? and therefore in particular Protagoras?

Student: To emphasize.

Yes, in a state of passion, true or faint. Sure. Well, to use the simplest example, one does not use oaths in proving a mathematical theory but in political debate oaths occur quite frequently. They are two opposite poles. Although Hobbes succeeded in swearing when he discovered Euclid, you remember? When Hobbes, a man in the forties, read Euclid in the bookstore and then he saw a theory that sounded very funny. And then he looked through the demonstration and then he said, "By god, it is so." And that was one of the few places in which oaths were used in connection with Euclid. Good.

Protagoras comes now passionately. All the things which have been building up all the time when this little dog was barking at him and annoying him, well, he must hit back. And this will come very soon. Yes.

Student: "and there are some things which may not be advantageous, and yet I call them good.

I thought that Protagoras was getting ruffled and excited; he seemed to be marshalling his powers for a retort. Seeing this, I minded my business, and gently said:--

When you say, Protagoras, that things not advantageous are good, do you mean not advantageous for man only,"

You see Socrates acts sensitively; withdraw, he is now becoming excited and dangerous. Yes?

Student: "do you mean not advantageous for man only, or not advantageous altogether? and do you call the latter good?"

In other words, can you sensibly call something advantageous or useful which is not useful to anybody, to any being, man or non-man? Protagoras is now in his element again. Yes.

Student: "Certainly not the last, he replied; for I know of many things,--meats, drinks, medicines, and ten thousand other things, which are not advantageous for man, and some which are advantageous; and some which are neither advantageous nor disadvantageous for man, but only for horses; and some for oxen only, and some for dogs; and some for no animals, but only for trees; and some...

No, no, wait a moment; in other words, up to this point, the useful differs just as the species differ. Yes, that is up to this point. That is perfectly reasonable; dog food is not human food. Yes.

Student: "and some for the roots of trees and not for their branches, as for example, manure,..."

Now here, now wait just one moment. Now here he goes within the species because the root or the twigs are a part of the species. The good things differ within the species. Now from here on one could go on to say that the good things differ from the individuals of a species to the individuals and, in particular, that justice may be advantageous for some sorts of human beings and disadvantageous for others; the argument developed by Glaucon in the Second Book of the Republic and so on and so on. But this Protagoras will not do, he will not go to these lengths as we will see. Yes. Now when he begins to speak of the dung.

Student: "which is a good thing when laid about the roots of a tree, but utterly destructive if thrown upon the shoots and young branches; or I may instance olive oil, which is mischievous to all plants, and generally most injurious to the hair of every animal with the exception of man, but beneficial to human hair and to the human body generally; and even in this application (so various and changeable is the nature of the benefit), that which is the greatest good to the exterior of the human body is a very great evil to the interior: and for this reason physicians always forbid their patients the use of oil in their food, except in very small quantities, just enough to extinguish the disagreeable sensation of smell in meats and sauces."

Yes, now the main thesis is: the good is multi-colored, to translate literally. And that is, of course, in obvious opposition to Plato when the good is one, which he develops in the Republic. But we do not have to go there, to those heights now.

Let us consider some example, dung, this most ill-smelling thing, this most ugly thing (ugly in the wider sense of the word) may be good. Now but since the ugly has also the sense of morally ugly, the implication is clear. Oil, this adorning thing, may be bad; the noble may be bad. Ill-smelling things may be bad for the interior man while they would be good for the exterior man. But the interior man is somehow more important.

This is the end of the discussion, as we shall see soon, and we can say thanks to Protagoras' outbreak (you know he refuses now to say yes or no) the identity of justice and moderation has not been proven. And the whole question is still open. But this we can say only by having read on for a few more lines, which I have done and perhaps some of you. And we will now read on.

Student: "When he had given this answer, the company cheered him."

Yes, "praised him." So, in other words, by one little move Protagoras has completely recovered the whole lost ground. He didn't cut too good a figure in these little question-and-answer things, but in the moment he was free to make a long speech, he won gloriously. Yes.

Student: "And I said: Protagoras, I have a wretched memory, and when any one makes a long speech to me I never remember what he is talking about. As then, if I had been deaf, and..."

Not quite "deaf," but, "hard of hearing."

Student: "and you were going to converse with me, you would have had to raise your voice; so now, having such a bad memory, I will ask you to cut your answers shorter, if you would take me with you."

You see now Socrates' discomfort here corresponding to Protagoras' victory. He is reduced now to appealing to Protagoras' compassion. I am so inferior to you that you must have some compassion with me. Poor memory and poor hearing have, of course, something in common. They impoverish understanding. Yes, good. Fine, yes.

Student: "What do you mean? he said: how am I to shorten my answers? shall..."

Yes, "now how do you command me to give brief answers?"

Student: "Now how do you command me to give brief answers?
shall I make them too brief?
Certainly not, I said.
But brief enough?
Yes, I said.
Shall I answer what appears to me to be brief
enough, or what appears to you to be brief enough?"

You see. Protagoras is now sitting on high again and he resents Socrates dictating, giving commands, Socrates' unjust conduct toward him. He does not say that Socrates is unjust in the logos, commits crimes in the logos; as Thrasymachus says, meaning that he makes logical errors or this kind of thing, he doesn't do that for then he would have to abandon all these sense of shame, all these reserves he has. But you see he is now again perfectly in control of the situation. Yes? Let us go on.

Student: "I have heard, I said, that you can speak and teach others to speak about the same things at such length that words never seemed to fail, or with such brevity that no one could use fewer of them. Please therefore, if you talk with me, to adopt the latter or more compendious method."

Socrates appeals now no longer to Protagoras' compassion, that was hopeless, but to what Protagoras owes to his reputation. He emphasizes his reputation because he says, I have heard. Before he had spoken of Protagoras' ability to give short answers as a fact, now he speaks of it only as a rumor because the ability to give short replies didn't prove to be so well founded. Yes, good.

Student: "Socrates, he replied, many a battle of words have I fought, and if I had followed the method of disputation which my adversaries desired, as you want me to do, I should have been no better than another, and the name of Protagoras would not have spread all over Hellas."

So, Protagoras owes his very reputation to the fact that he followed his own judgment regarding short or long speeches; meaning that as to his being well-advised regarding his own affairs, in other words as to his moderation. That is the situation.

Now, therefore it is hopeless, a deadlock. Yes.

Student: "I saw that he was not satisfied with his previous answers, and that he would not play the part of answerer any more if he could help;..."

No, "he would not answer any more voluntarily." Now Protagoras will never again voluntarily answer Socrates' questions. He must be forced to do so and this forcing will take place in the sequel. And this explains the situation, in answer to one of your questions before, this is the first time in Protagoras' life that he had made the wrong choices. That will never happen again. Good. Yes, now let us read the next speech.

Student: "and I considered that there was no call upon me to continue the conversation; so I said: Protagoras, I do not wish to force the conversation upon you if you had rather not, but when you are willing to argue with me in such a way that I can follow you, then I will argue with you. Now you, as is said of you by others and as you say yourself, are able to have discussions in shorter forms of speech as well as in longer, for you are a master of wisdom; but I cannot manage these long speeches: I only wish that I could. You, on the other hand, who are capable of either, ought to speak shorter as I beg you, and then we might converse. But I see that you are disinclined, and as I have an engagement which will prevent my staying to hear you at greater length (for I have to be in another place), I will depart; although I should have liked to have heard you."

Yes, it's quite a speech. Socrates speaks of his reputation again; that he will be exposed as a charlatan if he does not give in. But this is not the main point of the speech because he knows that it is no longer any use to appeal to Protagoras. This speech is addressed to the others; the others who might force Protagoras into doing what Socrates wants him to.

The situation is then this: by acting wisely, prudently, as we say, Protagoras acts unjustly. He disregards the common good, namely, that there should be a being together, a disputation.

Now we see here, as you may have observed before, that what is going on in this intermezzo is a continuation of the interrupted discussion of the relation of justice and moderation. But this subject is now no longer discussed but, so to speak, presented on the stage for our benefit in this courtroom scene as we can call it. First we get some provisional clarity about justice; justice means a decent respect for the opinion of others. The appeal to the compassion and the reputation of Protagoras was of no use. He is now trying to appeal to his respect for the opinion of others, for the interest of others, for the common good. And we must see what he comes out...everyone present who is somebody will be drawn in in order to bring about the solution. Yes?

Student: I think you have built up Socrates too much because isn't he the one who would argue any proposition for the sake of getting at Protagoras; he would argue with the many, against the many, with Protagoras, against Protagoras, under the earth, above the moon, anything to get a knife into Protagoras.

We will take this up, we will take this up but the moral imputation implied, which I would like to answer in the remaining minutes; I once wrote, when I had to write on these things, Socrates can do with any interlocutor what he likes. And then a very learned man said, this is true of the sophists not of Socrates. Well all I had to tell him that I have translated literally what Xenophon had said about Socrates. Socrates was a very clever dialectician, he was also much more than that but he was also that. But I must stop here.

Plato's Protagoras. A Course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science at the
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Now I will remind you of something which some of you will have forgotten and which one must not forget if one wants to derive the maximum benefit from reading this dialogue, namely the early parts, the conversation with the company, the conversation with Hippocrates, and so on. I will say something about this subject at a later date, perhaps next time.

Now we turn to our immediate context and I remind you of it. In his long speech consisting of a myth and a logos, Protagoras had drawn a picture most flattering to virtue; every member of society is a teacher of virtue. There is a gradation among the teachers; teachers of all and teachers of sons of the rich--teachers of all and teachers of the gifted. And somehow Protagoras is at the top of the whole teaching profession. Well, I think it would be unfair to both sides to compare him with Mr. Willis here in Chicago.

The teaching profession is a profession teaching virtue. His debate with Socrates which follows the long speech shows how shaky that virtue is. It shows it if one reads it with some care. We have seen that the relation between justice and piety is obscure. But still more obscure is the relation of justice and piety on the one hand moderation and wisdom on the other. It is not excluded that the prudent or wise man and hence Protagoras is unjust and that the just man may be a fool. But we know this route, for example, from Callicles in the Gorgias. But Protagoras is surely not a Callicles; he is a cautious foreigner. When the going gets rough he refuses to give short answers and embarks on a long speech. And this leads to the interruption of the discussion. An altercation between Protagoras and Socrates starts and this means that what we have heard before as an argument in speech; namely, the relation of moderation and wisdom on the one hand and justice on the other, is now being enacted before our eyes.

So, let me say there are two parts of virtue and let me define them provisionally as follows: moderation as the ability to take care of one's own interests and justice as complying with the interests of others or with the common good. Now we have begun to read that, last time, and arrived at 335c8. The situation: Socrates wishes to leave because Protagoras refuses to continue giving short answers. And Protagoras said, "why are you the one to lay down the law? how can you do that?" Good. And now I think that we will continue just at this point at 335c7.

Student: "Thus I spoke, and was rising from my seat with the intention of leaving, when Callias seized me by the right hand, and in his left hand caught hold of this old cloak of mine. He said: We shall not let you go, Socrates, for if you leave us this will be

the end of our discussions: I must therefore beg you to remain, as there is nothing in the world that I should like better than to hear you and Protagoras discourse. Do not deny the company this pleasure."

Or, "gratify all of us." Now we see here Socrates' great hurriedness; he would gladly listen to another long speech, no that was before but I remind you of that. Yes, he would gladly listen to another long speech of Protagoras but he is busy as he said shortly before. But we know that he is not busy and, in order not to mince words, we say he lies; but lying is a sort of injustice, Socrates is unjust. But, of course, his injustice has a noble justification. Why doesn't he wish to stay if he can?

Student: Because Hippocrates had taken...

In other words, he lies not for his own amplification but for the good of somebody else.

Now here we see, in what has just been read, that Socrates himself is forced to stay, for the sake of the common good. But since he is forced to stay then he doesn't stay voluntarily; this only confirms the impression that he is not just. This little point, that must have struck you, that he explains how Callias took hold of him--with the right he took his hand and with the left this old coat, a crude common coat--the implication of an old coat is that Socrates is not dressed up. Where is he dressed up?

Student: In his mind.

No, no. Let us not always go to the highest level. In which dialogue is he dressed up?

Student: In the Symposium.

In the Symposium. And we have seen that there are a few cross relations between the two dialogues. Yes, what does Socrates say now?

Student: "Now, I had got up, and was in the verge of departing. Son of Hipponicus,..."

That is Callias and this adds to the solemnity.

Student: "Son of Hipponicus, I replied, I have always admired, and do now heartily applaud and love your desire for wisdom,..."

Yes, well, in Greek the word philosophia, love of wisdom.

Student: "and I would gladly comply with your request, if I could. But the truth is that I cannot. And what you ask is as great an impossibility to me, as if you bade me run a race and keep pace with Crison of Himera, when in his prime, or with some long distance runner or courier. To such a request I should reply that I would fain ask the same of my own legs; but they refuse to comply. And therefore if you want to see Crison and me in the same race, you must bid him slacken his speed to mine, for I cannot run quickly,...

So, in other words, transform the race into a non-race. It might be amusing to see that but it would surely no longer be a race.

Student: "for I cannot run quickly, and he can run slowly. And in like manner if you want to hear me and Protagoras discoursing, you must ask him to shorten his answers, and to keep to the point, as he did at first; if not, how can there be any discussion? For discussion is one thing, and making an oration is quite another, in my humble opinion."

Yes, "making a public speech," a speech to the demos. Now Socrates refuses to stay under the conditions. "No one is obliged to do anything beyond his power." And of course a discussion is not a race.

Now you see the joke here when he speaks of Crison and the other kind of runners. Crison was a very famous man who had won a number of races including Olympian games. Protagoras may be equally well compared to a particularly famous champion and to any of the large group of runners. You see that the compliment for Protagoras is also qualified here. Yes.

Now in the dialogue between Socrates and Protagoras, of course, would be a very unexciting thing because they are not equals--that is also implied. In the dialogue, Socrates is much better and Socrates, of course, does not change his tempo for the sake of Protagoras and therefore such a conversation is also unexciting for that reason given here regarding long speeches. Yes.

So, the conflict is very clear now. Protagoras wants one thing and Socrates wants the other and no possibility of reconciliation. Yes.

Student: "But you see, Socrates, said Callias, that Protagoras may fairly claim to speak in his own way, just as you claim to speak in yours."

Yes, more literally, the word he uses, "Protagoras seems

to say just things." In other words, Callias seems to say, Socrates, you are unjust; Protagoras is just for he demands that everyone should be free to converse as he likes--equal rights for each, nothing seems to be more just. Socrates rejects this view, as we can see already now--no unequal rights for unequal people, as we can see in the race. And Protagoras and Socrates are not equals; Protagoras is there and Socrates is here. Justice demands that the superior must make concessions to the inferior if there is to be a community among them. But, we must say, after all is not Socrates in fact a superior man or not he to be the one who makes concessions to Protagoras? Yes, except for one point--he has to consider Hippocrates. We must never forget that. Yes.

So, in other words, Socrates is, in a way, unjust. But this injustice has a just reason. Whereas Protagoras' justice, just as it is, has an unjust reason because it has to do with his prestige not being impaired and that is not a sound reason. Yes?

Student: This great concern for Hippocrates makes one believe that Hippocrates was a fellow who could be horribly corrupted easily. But we saw that he, from his first statement, is far from corrupted in the view of Socrates. And the fact that he was greatly entranced with Protagoras and that Protagoras was the next big name to come down the pike. In other words, aren't we a little kind to Socrates by saying that he always wants to defend the already corrupted Hippocrates?

Yes, that is a much broader question. In other words, you assert that the whole assumption underlying the dialogue, the as the Greeks say is itself ironical.

Student: Yes.

Yes, I would admit that but we have first to take what we see very literally and seriously and then we can perhaps later take up the question why does Socrates do such like things, regardless of whether Hippocrates is apparent cause or justification or not. Good.

Now let us first...yes?

Student: Just a technical point, does Callias say both Socrates and Protagoras say just things or that Protagoras says them?

Protagoras.

Student: Because there is a textual source...

No, no that is Protagoras' point. Protagoras says that everyone should be free to converse as he likes; and if Protagoras likes to make long speeches and Socrates does not like to hear long speeches, that's too bad for Socrates. That is Protagoras' point of view which will become perfectly clear from this sequel. Now.

Student: "Here now Alcibiades interposed,...

You know, the great Alcibiades.

Student: "and said: That, Callias, is not a true statement of the case"

No, no, "you do not speak nobly," and which can also include, can also mean, you do not speak justly. He, in fact, means here that Callias' proposal is unjust. But let us first read this whole passage.

Student: "For our friend Socrates...

"Of course our friend Socrates here," "for this Socrates here."

Student: "For this Socrates here admits that he cannot make a speech--in this he..."

Meaning a long speech.

Student: "in this he yields the palm to Protagoras: but I should be greatly surprised if he yielded to any living man in the ability to handle the give and take of argument. Now, if Protagoras will make a similar admission, and confess that he is inferior to Socrates in argumentative skill, that is enough for Socrates;..."

You see he speaks on behalf of the race. He is strictly an agonistic man, the race. Well, if Protagoras concedes defeat right at the beginning, well, that's all we need. Yes.

Student: "but if he claims superiority in argument as well, let him ask and answer--not, when a question is asked, slipping away from the point, and instead of answering, making a speech at such length that most of his hearers forget the question at issue (not that Socrates is likely to forget--I will be bound for that, although he may pretend in fun that he has a bad memory)."

Remember that Socrates had said that he had a poor memory.

Now Alcibiades lets the cat out of the bag. Yes.

Student: "And Socrates appears to me to be more in the right than Protagoras;

Yes, well the term used here is the one which, since Aristotle, has a clear meaning of equity, the higher kind of justice. But it is not necessary to propose that here. Socrates seems to say the more equitable thing. Yes.

Student: "that is my view, and every man ought to say what he thinks."

Yes, very good, the honest democrat, Alcibiades. Now Alcibiades is obviously the bottle-holder for Socrates and he says, very clearly, siding with Socrates, that the opponent of Socrates, Protagoras, acts unjustly.

Socrates had not insisted on his right; Socrates had only kindly requested what Alcibiades asked for as a matter of right, namely, since he is the poorer of the two, Protagoras should make some concession to him. Implied is that justice is not equality, not simply equality but recognition of superiority or inferiority.

He also notes this point about Socrates' playfulness. We have said that Socrates lies; this is of course a harsh statement. Alcibiades brings it down to its proper proportions and says that he jokes. But, needless to say, a jocular lie is still a lie. We mustn't forget that. Yes.

So now it is perfectly clear that each of the two antagonists has found a bottle-holder. But this only aggravates the difficulty, it doesn't solve it. Now what comes next?

Student: "When Alcibiades had done speaking, some one--Critias, I believe--went on to say: O Prodicus and Hippias, Callias appears to me to be a partisan of Protagoras: and this led Alcibiades, who loves opposition, to take the other side. But we should not be partisans either of Socrates or of Protagoras; let us unite in entreating both of them not to break up the discussion."

Now Socrates does not say that Critias said it, he only says, I believe. This is a reminder that this is not always a verbatim report. I believe that no one of you believed that it was always a verbatim report of an actual conversation, but it is not uninteresting that it is pointed out here.

Now Critias does not say, if you read carefully, that Alcibiades sides with Socrates. In a way Critias himself sides with Socrates, as we have seen at the initial scene

Alcibiades and Critias came together after Socrates and Hippocrates and they had formed a kind of group by themselves as you remember. Critias sides with Socrates only to one extent, in as much as Socrates, in contradistinction to Protagoras, wishes to continue the discussion.

Now Critias brings up another aspect of justice; justice is impartiality. We all know that. By bringing in Prodicus and Hippias here he unwittingly prepares that deliberation with the other sophists which Socrates had quasi promised to Hippocrates in 314b to c. So, now, we have quite literally the establishment of a court of justice. It begins with the proposal of Critias. Now how does it go on?

Student: "Prodicus added...

You remember Critias had started it and now the two others, sophists, speak subsequently one after the other.

Student: "Prodicus added: That, Critias, seems to me to be well said, for those who are present at such discussions ought to be impartial hearers of both the speakers; remembering, however, that impartiality is not the same as equality, for both sides should be impartially heard, and yet an equal meed should not be assigned to both of them; but to the wiser a higher meed should be given, and a lower to the less wise."

Yes, now Prodicus accepts the role of arbiter but he demands unequal distribution, more to the wiser and less to the unwise. Yes?

Student: "And I as well as Critias would beg you, Protagoras and Socrates, to grant our request,

You see now the formation of a third party; Socrates and Protagoras the two parties and now a third party which throws some light on foreign policy now. Yes.

Student: "which is, that you will dispute with one another and not wrangle; for friends dispute with friends out of good-will, but only adversaries and enemies wrangle. And then our meeting will be most delightful; for in this way you, who are the speakers, will be most likely to win esteem, and not praise only, among us...

No, no, "not win praise," he explains that.

Student: And not mere praise?

No, "and not be praised," no mere praise.

Student: "and not mere praise, among us who are your audience; for esteem is a sincere conviction of the hearers' souls, but praise is often an insincere verbal expression of men uttering falsehoods contrary to their conviction. And thus we who are the hearers will be gratified and not pleased; for gratification is of the mind when receiving wisdom and knowledge, but pleasure is of the body when eating or experiencing some other bodily delight."

Now, this is, in a way, a very crude parody of Prodicus' specialty; making subtle distinctions between the meaning of different terms in order to avoid logical errors.

Now what Prodicus does here is to appeal to the better part of Protagoras and Socrates. The implication is that he is morally superior to both. And he admonishes them to be friends. This is all we have to consider now and so let us see how it goes on.

Student: "Thus spoke Prodicus, and many of the company applauded his words."

So, you see, Prodicus does not receive universal approval, universal praise, as quite a few others. Hippias will receive universal praise soon after and we will see that this is very meaningful. But why should Prodicus' speech not receive universal praise, if we disregard this subtle distinction of terms and consider the substance of the speech? What did he say that is not very popular?

Student: That the wise deserve more than the others.

Yes, I think so. Now let us go on to the next speech.

Student: "Hippias the sage spoke next."

The only one who is given this manifestly ironical adjective here of the wise one. Yes. You remember him from before? He was a physicist and half mathematician. Yes.

Student: "He said: All of you who are here present I reckon to be kinsmen and friends and fellow-citizens, by nature and not by convention; for by nature like is akin to like, whereas convention is the tyrant of mankind, and often compels us to do many things which are against nature. How great would be the disgrace then, if we, who know the nature of things,

Now this has a very powerful, literal meaning--the nature of things, especially the natural things. Yes.

Student: "and are the wisest of the Hellenes, and as such are met together in this city, which is the center of wisdom in Hellas, and in the greatest and most glorious house of this city, should have nothing to show worthy of this height of dignity, but should only quarrel with one another like the meanest of mankind!"

Now let us stop here. We see the picture: there is some wisdom in the world but concentrated in Greece; and in Greece it is concentrated in Athens; and in Athens still it is concentrated in the house of that great Callias.

Now Hippias, the physicist, addresses all men present whereas Prodicus had only addressed Socrates and Protagoras. All men present are praised because all of them are wise, meaning also Callias and the others. And no wonder...well, read a little bit later after the end of this speech.

Student: "This proposal was received by the company with universal approval;"

Ah! "And all present." Naturally, everyone was flattered. He appeals to natural right as you see here, "all wise men are akin and fellow citizens." Well, all wise men form a city and this is of course a natural city not a conventional city. They help one another as fellow citizens and do not help the unwise, for the unwise are people who by definition cannot be helped because they would make a mess of every help they are given. Now this is a very important point for the understanding of this kind of literature. I mean, if you said it in generalization, helping friends and not helping or perhaps even harming the non-friends, the enemies, did you ever hear this? Where?

Student:[inaudible]

Who says it? with a reference to the poet Simonides who will come up here soon. Yes, but in the dialogue which has come down to us as a Platonic dialogue now generally regarded as an adherent to the Sophist Thrasymachus says that the Socratic view of justice is that justice consists in helping friends and hurting enemies. And in Aristophanes' Clouds which is in a way anti-Socratic this is the principle by which Socrates' pupil acts. He refuses to pay his debts to the creditors because he is wise and they are not wise, and there are no obligations from the wise to the unwise.

Hippias in contradistinction to Prodicus implies the equality, not of all men, that is nonsense as some people have understood that, but, I have only one intelligible word

of all intellectuals, in the widest sense; i.e. people who do nothing but reading and/or writing or similar things. Well, this must, of course, be defined because you can say a bank clerk also does nothing but reading and writing but no one would call him intellectual so you must improve a bit on my provisional definition. And this gives in to terrific applause. You see, the Socratic is always between the true intellectual and the sham intellectual just as we make the distinction between the true physician and the sham physician. Now in this case the distinction is fairly simple because we ask him to produce a diploma; but there are no diplomas for intellectuals. I mean you cannot possibly get a diploma from any institution. But the half-heartedness and the inconsistency of Hippias is, of course, shown by the fact that this natural city of the wise consists exclusively of Greeks; and why should there not be non-Greek wise men?

What he understands by the wise men are the more sophisticated among the Greek gentlemen and including, of course, himself and the others. But we must finish his speech now.

Student: "I do pray and advise you, Protagoras,

Now he addresses the two antagonists themselves.

Student: "and you, Socrates, to agree upon a compromise. Let us be your peacemakers. And do not you, Socrates, aim at this precise and extreme brevity in discourse, if Protagoras objects,

No, "if it is not pleasant to Protagoras." I simply do not know why they make these silly unliteral translations because, I believe, one English is as good as the other. So, it must be some desire to deviate by hook or by crook from the letter of the text. And what is underlying that I think we would have to call in Dr. Freud or someone. Yes.

Student: "but loosen and let go the reins of speech, that you words may present themselves grander and more graceful before us. Neither do you, Protagoras, go forth on the gale with every sail set out of sight of land into an ocean of words, but let there be a mean observed by both of you. Do as I say. And let me also persuade you to choose an umpire...

"To elect."

Student: "to elect an umpire or overseer or president; he will keep watch over your words and will prescribe their proper length."

Yes, well, "the medium length," one could say. We see

Hippias goes beyond Prodicus in his proposal. He does not leave it, as Prodicus did, at admonition--"behave like friends"--he proposes an institutional safeguard--an arbiter. And the implication is, of course, that Protagoras and Socrates are not wise enough and each of them pursues one extreme, one the terribly short speeches and the other the terribly long speeches. Let there be a wiser man who will watch the right mean between shortness and brevity and let him be the arbiter. And, of course, for this reason, as well as the one before, he receives universal applause. Yes, now?

Student: "This proposal was received by the company with universal applause;

"And all praised it," that one must keep in mind; what is praised and what is not. Plato didn't do these things, make these decisions for nothing. Yes?

Student: Don't we have to remember Prodicus' definition of praise?

Yes, but since this has been ridiculed I do not believe that we can accept that. I do not believe that we can ascribe this to Plato, to Socrates rather. Yes?

Student: Does the last proposal of Hippias mean that his natural city needs convention to correct the faults?

That is a very good point. But in fairness to Hippias, we must say that he does many things against nature he does not say that he does not do everything against nature. But that is a good point. Surely, that is a typical example of a convention that must be established by human agencies.

Student: [barely audible] Can we say that this is a correct analysis, or Plato's analysis...because of these second-string sophists that are present.

Well, well, there are not only second-string sophists but there are also Athenian citizens who want to belong to the avant-garde.

Student: That is what I was getting at. Do these people feel some satisfaction of their vanity in being lumped together...

Yes, but don't all people like, I mean all with some exceptions, to be praised as wise? I mean as a very nasty man once put it, namely, Hobbes, to disagree with a man means tacitly to accuse him of ignorance. And this is his

explanation of the fact why discussions become so easily nasty. Because the man whose view is contested regards himself as insulted by the disagreement.

Student: Well, I agree with that but my question was if that is so, how much significance should we attach to the fact that the approval is universal as opposed to partial in the case of Prodicus?

I would say that one should not disregard the point which I made and which I believe you repeated; namely, that Protagoras had spoken only of...Prodicus had spoken only of Protagoras and Socrates as wise men. And he says, we all are wise. And that is true. But we, it has also something to do with the thing--Prodicus led only to admonition and Hippias arrived at a proposal with, so to speak, teeth in it. It doesn't have true teeth as we shall see but it is at least an attempt at an institution guaranteeing in contradistinction to a mere admonition. Yes?

Student: Is there anything at all significant in the fact that the one who is really the most foolish of them, Hippias the sage, the one who is kidded for his lack of wisdom, is the one who comes the closest to the philosopher-king?

Yes, but to a caricature of the philosopher-king. We will see that in the immediate sequel. No, let me put it this way, in a way the whole Protagoras is a justification of Hippias over against Protagoras. We cannot see that now but in anticipation I suggest it. Because the last section of the Protagoras contains a vindication of the art of measurement, and that is of course a mathematical art. And we know that Hippias liked these things and Protagoras looked down on these things. But this only means that a less intelligent man may even occasionally hit on an important point which a man superior to him misses. We know there are no mechanical devices here and I believe they will never be found. Now let us go on.

Student: "Callias said that he would not let me off, and they begged me to choose an overseer. But I said that to choose an umpire of discourse would be unseemly; for if the person chosen was inferior, then the inferior or worse ought not to preside over the better; or if he was equal, neither would that be well; for he who is our equal will do as we do, and what will be the use of choosing him? And if you say, 'Let us have a better then,'--to that I answer that in fact you cannot have any one who is wiser than Protagoras. And if you choose

another who is not really better, and whom you only say is better, to put another over him as though he were an inferior person would be an unworthy reflection on him;

Is that not perfectly clear? It is impossible to choose an arbiter; an inferior obviously is an insult, an equal is impractical because he would make the same mistake, and a superior is unthinkable if you have a man of such superior wisdom as Protagoras. There can be no arbiter, no superior, no ruler of the wise. Impartiality is very well but impartiality without wisdom will be of no use. He exaggerates; sometimes the simple impartiality will do, as we all know. But in cases of any intricacy, impartiality is not enough, obviously.

The wise man is the sole and sufficient judge of what he chooses. If Protagoras chooses long speeches, he is the best judge. And if we think that Socrates overdoes his praise of Protagoras and regards himself as equally wise, it also means Socrates if he chooses short speeches, no one can interfere with that. In other words, let me make this quite clear what the issue is: the wise man does not pay respect to the opinion of the unwise, i.e. to an unwise opinion. That is to say, he is concerned with his good. He is, according to the definition in the debate between Socrates and Protagoras, moderate-wise but he is not just. He is not just because by justice we now understand a deference to the opinion of others, regardless of whether they are wise or unwise.

You see how our subject, moderation and wisdom versus justice, is continued here in deed and, of course, in a comical way, this is a piece of a comedy; but in a good comedy there is always an underlying seriousness.

Someone raised his hand? Yes.

Student: Well, then we sort of get a vindication of Callias' original opinion--each one should be allowed to speak the way he wants to; Protagoras to make long speeches and Socrates to make short speeches.

Yes, but Socrates refuses to listen; that is an injustice of Socrates. Let us see how this develops.

Student: "not that, as far as I am concerned, any reflection is of much consequence to me."

Yes, Socrates is here...in one sentence not humility because Socrates is not vain; that is somehow the whole presupposition of the presentation. But that does not mean that Socrates is humble in the sense that he is not aware of his superiority to the others, if that is the meaning of

humility. Yes.

Student: "Let me tell you then what I will do in order that the conversation and discussion may go on as you desire. If Protagoras is not disposed to answer let him ask and I will answer; and I will endeavour to show at the same time how, as I maintain,

"To show him," did he not bring this out?

Student: No.

You see very well the high claim: I am going to give Protagoras a...I, the unwise one, the man of little wisdom, am going to give Protagoras, the wise man...lesson in how to do that. Yes.

Student: "to show him at the same time how, as I maintain, he ought to answer: and when...

No, "how in my opinion the answerer should answer," not merely...in other words, he will give him a lesson in short speeches. Whereas he is perfectly willing to grant that Protagoras is the taskmaster in long speeches. But now we are concerned with short speeches because Socrates has no time, we recall, to listen to long speeches. Yes.

Student: "and when I have answered as many questions as he likes to ask, let him in like manner answer me; and if he seems to be not very ready at answering the precise question asked of him, you and I will unite in entreating him, as you entreated me, not to spoil the discussion. And this will require no special overseer--all of you shall be overseers together."

Socrates has the best of two worlds; he considers the wishes of the others: the wish for arbitration, after he has shown that arbitration is impossible, he makes this great concession--you all are arbiters. But why does he make this concession? In order that his wish will be considered after. So, Protagoras will first answer the questions, no, Socrates will first answer the questions, but, then, in the later stage, Socrates will again be in the position of the questioner.

In other words, the compromise proposed by Socrates is entirely a compromise on Socrates' terms, not on Protagoras' terms. That is especially clear in the passage to which I referred: I am going to teach him what it means to give brief answers. All will be overseers of Protagoras' conduct. A kind of democracy we get in this way. Now, if he who answers knows because if you do not know you cannot answer, and

therefore the non-knower cannot answer, and therefore is wise. Socrates now admits that he is wise; he can answer the questions and not merely raise questions. I mean the comical exaggeration you must always take into account. He even admits that he is able to teach Protagoras how to answer.

He refuses to be subjected to an arbiter because he is at least as good as any other. You know, all these features at first glance are signs of an unjust man. But this injustice is special. Yes, now?

Student: "This was generally approved,

"By all," because generally can also mean not universally. But in the Greek it is perfectly clear that all agree. Yes.

Student: "All agreed, and Protagoras, though very much against his will, was obliged to agree..."

"Was compelled," obliging is not the same as compelling. And here it is perfectly clear that he was forced.

Student: "was compelled to agree that he would ask questions; and when he had put a sufficient number of them, that he would answer in his turn those which he was asked in short replies."

In other words, no long speeches anymore, that is out. Socrates is completely victorious. The apparent compromise is, in fact, not a compromise at all. Protagoras is compelled by the others to dance to Socrates' tune. Yes?

Student: How do these rules that Socrates established for the discussion differ from any that the umpire might select? Isn't he in a way prescribing the... overseeing the length of words as the overseer would?

Yes, but it makes a great difference...if you have ever been in a meeting led by a chairman who was an efficient chairman and a meeting at which there is no chairman except someone who said you come now and it would never come back it would make a great difference.

Now Protagoras is compelled to accept Socrates' proposal, compelled to continue the conversation. You remember in 335b1 Socrates had observed that Protagoras would not voluntarily continue the conversation; well, he is now forced to. Socrates has successfully used justice for his purposes. But this purpose includes justice; namely, consideration for Hippocrates and other people of this kind.

So we have seen before when we saw the earlier scene, you know, when Socrates compared the men he saw in Callias' house to figures from Hades. Socrates is the Odysseus, but

a just Odysseus. Yes?

Student: Well, couldn't Protagoras see that he is defeated and why does he not at this point attempt a long speech explaining why it happens that...

But, you see, somehow this wouldn't fit into his consideration. He wants to win.

Student: Protagoras perhaps could by making even at this point a long speech.

Then Socrates would have left. Socrates would have refused to have listened to a long speech. One of the most striking things in the litigation scene as we may call that, is something which ain't, which isn't there, and which you see only if you ask what is missing. Protagoras doesn't say a word in this whole litigation scene and, after all, Protagoras is not exactly a mute man.

Now let me say a few words about the litigation scene in general. Here Socrates shows not only that Protagoras is a poor teacher, that he had already shown in the debate, but also that he is a poor public speaker--the term used in 336b3 where Socrates says he should not, Protagoras should not engage in public speech, in rhetoric. Protagoras is completely silent in this scene, after the beginning, and which means in practical terms that he cannot take care of his interests; Callias must work for him. He lacks the ability to advise himself well regarding his benefit; others must take care of him. He loses because he is unobliging while Socrates is, or appears, obliging. He says well, my long speeches I am sorry I am not good at that, I grant that. Or on another level, long speeches are wonderful but I have no time. That this contradicts itself is another matter but it is at least obliging. Protagoras, the alleged teacher of good advice, lacks good advice in his own case. Now, but, being obliging, i.e. ceding from one's right, is rudimentary justice, perhaps even more than rudimentary justice. Hence, Socrates acts on the principle that it is moderate or wise to be just. It is to your own interest if you are obliging, if you cede. The man who wants to have more or who wants to win loses; nothing could be more edifying--Protagoras loses for Protagoras explicitly acts on the principle that it is good to have more, 335c as you will see when he says, I would not be that famous personality if I had always conducted my speeches according to the wishes of my opponents. Socrates seems to do the same; that leads to a conflict and hence, since these are not savages, the demand for arbitration or for impartial justice. But, imparitality is not enough. The arbiter must also be wise. Take a very simple case: if the object of some arbitration is some stock exchange where you have to be very wise in

stock exchange. How could a man, ignorant of these things, be an arbiter? Therefore, there cannot be arbiters, i.e. rulers, of the wise. The wise cannot be obliged to obey the laws made by unwise people because that is fundamentally the same case. Yet by being obliging to the unwise Socrates succeeds in laying down the law favorable to him.

That is so; and a strange comedy. But, as every comedy, it is unreal, as people say, untrue, it abstracts from something very important. What is the defective truth of this simple proposition that a man like Socrates who is so prudent, so obliging, takes best care of his interests and he will lay down the law?

Student: This is a select group..

Exactly, this is not universally true. We have only to remember Socrates' defeat in the trial of the generals and especially his defeat in his own trial. Socrates succeeds only in the company of the sophists and their adherents i.e. in an environment where only speeches count. But in the polis, not only speeches count and maybe a very poor speaker gets most of the ballots. And behind that is practical power ultimately and therefore here no one thinks of fighting it out in a muscular way; it is all done by speeches. So, that is a point which will come up again.

Student: It wasn't just that simple that practical power is rhetoric...

No, no, Socrates proved to be better, I mean, Socrates gained universal, almost universal agreement.

Student: Yes, but wouldn't you say that was due to his superior speaking ability than to his justice?

Yes, well, sure, I myself said that but we must not forget that Socrates' injustice is of a particular kind; it is injustice in the service of justice. If you want to have a humble contemporary example, I am sure there is no one here--I believe not even you and you--who do not know the character of Perry Mason. Do you? uh Thursday from seven to eight. You must see that if you want to understand this country. And Perry Mason who also commits acts of breaking and entering and you know and quite a few other things and yet never in order to feather his own nest but only for the sake of justice. Now on a grander scale that is done by Socrates. Now, don't laugh about that. Perry Mason is described by his creditor as, how does he call it, clean like a hound's tooth and sharp like a steel trap. This man has understood an important point of Aristotle's ethics--the difference between moral and intellectual virtue. So, don't despise these things.

Student: I wasn't despising them!

...which you cannot do when you hear a long speech. Where the Athenians, very fair men, say we don't want to make long speeches because you take notes and then you miss what he is saying while you are taking notes. So there is something even on the crude level in Plato. But it is clear that sometimes it is absolutely impossible to answer a question without saying that the question is very ill-phrased, you don't make certain distinctions, these words which you use are so ambiguous that you can give all kinds of answers and so, a long speech.

But, therefore, as stated and as frequently used by Socrates, it is, of course, comical as if it were really like one who can, is a good runner and a slow runner. You know? And then, of course, from the point of running naturally the fast runner should win. But in thinking it is not so much the fastness or slowness but the truth. But still, to some extent, the truth is bound up with a certain kind of slowness; step by step. People who are very clever can do this very fast but they also must go step by step more or less. Yes? Good.

Now let us, oh I am sorry, I forgot you. Yes?

Student: I am still worried about this scene as an illustration of well-advisedness and justice and the disunity of it. Socrates' basic tenet, if you stick to the essentials, is, I think, an unjust one. That is to say he interprets what the company at large wants, which is a continuation of the discussion and then begins the argument by setting forth as a condition of the continuation of the discussion that it be on his terms. And despite the twists of the argument, it eventually comes down to that and Socrates wins his point. This then is taking advantage of the desires of other people in order to fulfill his own desires.

Yes, sure, I believe I admitted that but I only add this qualification: why does Socrates do it? Does he do it in order to show off? or to win an argument? or does he not have a nobler purpose? And, I would say, he has obviously a nobler purpose; indicated by the presence of Hippocrates. And Socrates says indeed, and that is the point, it is one of these ticklish, marginal questions: how far can you go in disregarding justice for the sake of justice. The Robin Hood problem. But one does not understand the problem of justice if one does not take into ones consideration these marginal problems As it were, the true problem shows in what seems to

be the merely marginal problem. I mean, I have nothing against the assertion that Socrates acts unjustly provided you understand, you define, the character of his unjust action properly. He cheats in a way but what is the purpose for which he cheats? That this issue is not settled by the fact is shown very simply. I think we are about in the middle of the dialogue and the other half is needed to satisfy your reasonable doubts. So I suggest that we go on.

Now I would like to say one thing about the next section which starts at the end of 338 and goes into 347. In this section, Protagoras asks the questions and Socrates answers, as was stipulated by Socrates' law, but, the largest part of this section, from 342 to the end, consists of one long speech by Socrates which proves clearly his injustice. Protagoras mustn't make long speeches, strictly forbidden, but Socrates does. Now let's go on.

Student: "He began to put his questions as follows:--

Not, "as follows," about as follows." That is another indication that this is not a verbatim report. In other words, we do not know how much Socrates made up this story while telling it to these comrades. This is not surprising because surely Plato made these things up more or less out of pure cloth, and poets are of course liars. If Tolstoy begins his novels in this way: say, "X" stood at this window--of course he never stood at that window, "X" never existed. You would say that is very crude but it has some non-crude implications. Good, now.

Student: "I am of the opinion, Socrates, he said, that skill in poetry is the principal part of education; and this I conceive to be the ability to understand...

"The principal," is perhaps too strong. "A very great part," can also mean...that is the Greek superlative without article...can mean both a very great thing or the greatest. Yes.

Student: "and this I conceive to be the ability to understand which compositions of the poets are correct, and which are not, and to know how to distinguish between them and, when asked, to give the reasons."

Now why does Protagoras turn to the criticism and interpretation of poetry? Well, it's clear, he assumes that in this field he will be superior to Socrates.

Poetry is somehow more akin to long speeches than to short speeches, at least of the Socratic kind. We know there are short speeches in drama for example but they are not

Socratic short speeches.

He turns then to the poet which he chooses, Simonides. And Simonides was one of the ancient sophists mentioned by Protagoras who concealed their being sophists. Simonides was said to be the first poet to write poetry for pay, which would also link him up with Protagoras who taught virtue for pay. Lessing, the famous German author of the seventeenth century, called Simonides, on the basis of all kinds of information, the Greek Voltaire; a view which is now universally rejected by classical scholars but this does not necessarily prove that it is groundless. Yes, good.

So, in other words, Protagoras now brings up a way of handling things in which he believes that he is likely to get back at Socrates.

Student: "And I propose to transfer the question which you and I have been discussing to the domain of poetry; we will speak as before of virtue, but in reference to a passage of a poet."

So, in other words, the subject matter will remain the same only the treatment will be different.

Student: "Now Simonides says to Scopas the son of Creon the Thessalian:--

It is with difficulty that, on the one hand, man can become truly good, built four-square in hands and feet and mind, a work without a flaw.

Do you know the poem? or shall I repeat the whole? There is no need, I said; for I am perfectly well acquainted with the ode,--I have made a careful study of it."

So, this simple triumph of mere, mere better information is not given to Protagoras. Yes.

Student: "Very well, he said."

That you read well.

Student: "And do you think that the ode is a good composition, and true?

Yes, I said, both good and true.

But if there is a contradiction, can the composition be good or true?

No, not in that case, I replied."

So, Socrates thinks very highly of Simonides' poem. The standard of judgment which is common to Protagoras and Socrates is this: self-contradiction, even in a poem, is fatal. Yes?

Well, I believe that no present-day poet would accept that but Socrates and Protagoras agree as to that. I mean, not that different characters may not contradict, that is no difficulty but the poet speaking his own mind may never contradict himself. This is a tough demand. Yes.

Student: "And is there not a contradiction? he asked. Reflect. Well, my friend, I have reflected. And does not the poet proceed to say, 'I do not agree with the word of Pittacus, albeit the utterance of a wise man: With difficulty can a man be good'? Now you will observe that this is said by the same poet, who made the first statement. I know it. And do you think, he said, that the two sayings are consistent? Yes, I said, I think so (at the same time I could not help fearing that there might be something in what he said). And you think otherwise? Why, he said, how can he be consistent in both? First of all, premising as his own thought, 'It is with difficulty that a man can become truly good'; and then a little further on in the poem, forgetting, and blaming Pittacus and refusing to agree with him, when he says, 'With difficulty can a man be good,'

Yes, "and forgetting Pittacus who had said the same thing as he had said."

Student: "And yet when he blames him who says the same with himself, he obviously also blames himself; so that he must be wrong either in his first or his second assertion."

So, Protagoras proves that Simonides contradicts himself. Now what is the use of that? Well, one could tentatively suggest, don't take me down on that, if Simonides, notoriously a wise man, contradicts himself on virtue why may not Protagoras too? without losing the epithet of wisdom? Perhaps there is also this possibility, perhaps it is the same kind of contradiction, namely that Simonides said of one kind of virtue that it is difficult and of another kind that it is not difficult. And perhaps Protagoras means something like that. I do not know. Go on.

Student: "Many of the audience cheered and applauded this."

You see, "many." He does not get universal acclaim. Why not? I cannot answer that question but it should be answered--the perfect interpreter should be able to answer it.

There is one difficulty, incidentally. The poem by Simonides is not completely preserved. The bit we know of it is chiefly known through the quotations here; this makes a minor difficulty, and perhaps not even a minor difficulty. Yes?

Student: Well, it says many here but certainly I suppose Alcibiades would cheer.

That is the point. That is the point, you mean those that were simply following the party line. That is possible yes. Good. Now let us see. The sequel is easier to understand.

Student: "And I felt at first giddy and faint, as if I had received a blow from the hand of an expert boxer, when I heard his words and the sounds of cheering; and to tell you the truth, I..."

To whom does he tell the truth?

Student: The companion.

Yes. You see that this is a narrated dialogue. He didn't say the truth then. Yes.

Student: "I wanted to get time to think what the meaning of the poet really was. So I turned to Prodicus and called him."

You see Socrates lies again. Yes?

Student: He lied before too when he said, "at the same time I could not help fearing that there might be something to what he said." Because earlier he said he had been perfectly familiar with the poem.

No, no there is no doubt that he was perfectly familiar with the poem.

Student: Yes, but then when he fakes this fear...

Yes, but after all Socrates doesn't claim to be omniscient and might fear a real difficulty which might not have occurred to him. I think that the description of the situation is very beautiful; like someone knocked out. Socrates adopts the language of the agon, the contest. And Protagoras seems to have won at this point. Yes, now?

Student: "Prodicus, I said, Simonides is a countryman of yours, and..."

Well, let us say fellow citizen, from the same polis.

Student: "and you ought to come to his aid."

Literally, "it is just for you to come to his aid."

Student: "I must appeal to you, like the river Scamander in Homer, who, when beleaguered by Achilles, summons the Simois to aid him, saying:

'Brother dear, let us both together stay
the force of the hero.'

And I summon you, for I am afraid that Protagoras will make an end of Simonides."

Yes, now Socrates compares Protagoras to Achilles. Now Achilles is presented in the dialogue Hippias, the lesser Hippias. Now Achilles is preferred by Hippias to Odysseus because Odysseus was a notorious liar and Achilles never lied, he is absolutely honest. And this is the theme of this dialogue. And he compares Simonides to Scamander and Prodicus to Simois. But in a way Socrates identifies himself with Simonides or Scamander. Now these are two rivers, the story is told in the twenty-first book of the Iliad. The two river gods fight Achilles and try to save Troy. And he compares himself and Prodicus and Simonides to these river gods. But Scamander is finally defeated by _____, the god of the smithy, the helper of Achilles. What does this mean? Will Socrates anticipate that Simonides will be defeated by Protagoras, or at least, by some immortal helper of Protagoras? We do not know. Let us see whether some of these things will become clear in the sequel.

Student: "Now is the time to rehabilitate Simonides, by the application of your literary art, which enables you to distinguish 'will' and 'wish', and make other charming distinctions like those which you drew just now."

In other words, will and wish, this distinction is not very pronounced in Greek--that is of some importance. Yes.

Student: "And I should like to know whether you would agree with me; for I am of opinion that there is no contradiction in the words of Simonides. And first of all I wish that you would say whether, in your opinion, Prodicus, 'being' is the same as 'becoming.' Not the same, certainly, replied Prodicus."

No, more. "Different, by Zeus! said Prodicus;" one of the very rare oaths here.

Student: "Different, by Zeus, replied Prodicus.
Did not Simonides first set forth, as his own view,
that 'It is with difficulty can a man become truly
good'?"

Quite right, said Prodicus.
And then he blames Pittacus, not as Protagoras
imagines, for repeating that which he says himself,
but for saying something different from himself.
Pittacus does not say as Simonides says, that it
is with difficulty that a man can become good, but
it is with difficulty that a man can be good: and
our friend Prodicus would maintain that being,
Protagoras, is not the same as becoming;"

Yes, "being and becoming are not the same, as Prodicus
here says." And I believe that we would grant that without
having the authority of Prodicus for that. Yes?

Student: "and if they are not the same, then Simonides is not
inconsistent with himself. I dare say that Prodicus
and many others would say, as Hesiod says,
 'On the one hand, it is with difficulty
 for a man to become good,
 For the gods have made virtue the reward
 of toil;..."

Literally, "the gods would sweat in front of virtue,"
before you get true virtue, you have to sweat. Yes.

Student: "But on the other hand, when you have climbed
 the height,
 Then, to retain virtue, however difficult
 the acquisition, is easy."

Yes, in other words, Socrates solves it as we will see.
Being is not becoming and therefore Simonides does not contra-
dict himself; for he may have thought that it is difficult
to become virtuous, to acquire the habit of virtue to use
later language, but easy to be virtuous. Once you are on
that peak or once you have acquired the habit of moderation
regarding food for example, it is very easy for you to be
moderate. In other words, Socrates, Prodicus, Simonides, this
strange triad, deny that being and becoming is the same
and Protagoras, by implication, asserts that being and becoming
is the same and therefore he makes that blunder in the
interpretation of the Simonidian poem. And, that there is
such a connection--there was a Greek philosopher, Heraclitus,
who was said to have said everything is in flux like rivers
and Protagoras is linked up with that school in the Platonic
dialogue Theaetetus. So, this is not an isolated point.
Socrates, Simonides, Prodicus do not agree with this view
that everything is in flux.

But this makes it, however, more difficult. Why does he compare himself or Prodicus or Simonides to the river Scamander and Simois? That is very dark. That remains completely dark for the time being.

Incidentally, Prodicus' oath, which we have observed, is perfectly intelligible in the context because he has been called upon as a fellow citizen of Simonides. In Greek you don't have a distinction between the term citizen and fellow citizen so citizens were more than purely theoretical men. A simple example: political orations on the one hand oathless on the other hand. Yes, we can read I think a bit more.

Student: "Prodicus heard and approved; but Protagoras said: Your rehabilitation, Socrates, involves a greater error than is contained in the sentence which you are correcting.
Alas! I said, Protagoras; then I am a sorry physician, and I do but aggravate a disorder which I am seeking to cure.
Such is the fact, he said.
How so? I asked.
It would reflect great ignorance on the part of the poet, he replied, if he says that virtue, which in the opinion of all men is the hardest of all things, can be easily retained."

Yes, if virtue is such a low thing that it could be said to be easily maintained.

Now there is a passage which I need now, which I want to look up, yes. Protagoras says in a word, Simonides cannot possibly accept what Socrates suggests, mainly that the possession of virtue is an easy thing i.e. a low thing; what is easy, what is cheap is low. The value of the things are those which are hard to get. No one pays any money for air although it is very valuable as we all know and, uh, well, good.

The possession of virtue must be a difficult thing, must be a difficult thing. That is the objection. Now, of course, it raises one question on the basis of our previous reading--if virtue is such a difficult thing and then the teaching of virtue also cannot be easy. And what about the attractiveness of Protagoras' teaching? But this only in passing.

Socrates says that he is a still worse physician than the illness; meaning self-contradiction is bad, but the depreciation of virtue would be still worse. Now let us read the next speech and then we conclude.

Student: "Well, I said, and how fortunate are we..."

Yes, "By Zeus, by Zeus."

Student: "By Zeus, I said, and how fortunate are we in having Prodicus among us, at the right moment; for he has a wisdom, Protagoras, which, as I imagine, is more than human and of very ancient date, and may be as old as Simonides or even older. Learned as you are in many things, you appear to know nothing of this; but I know, for I am a disciple of Prodicus here. And now, if I am not mistaken, you do not understand the word difficult in the sense which Simonides intended; and I must correct you, as Prodicus corrects me when I use the word awful as a term of praise."

No, say "tremendous," bring it closer to present American usage.

Student: "If I say that Protagoras or any one else is a tremendously wise man, he asks me if I am not ashamed of calling that which is good, tremendous;

Yes, doesn't that make sense. Or you can also insert terrific, as in "terrific play," used in the sense of a good play.

Student: "and then he explains to me that the term terrific is always taken in a bad sense, and that no one speaks of being terrifically healthy or wealthy, or of terrific peace, but of terrific disease, terrific war, terrific poverty, meaning by the term terrific, evil. And I think that Simonides and his fellow citizens the Ceanes, when they spoke of difficult meant evil, or something which you do not understand. Let us ask Prodicus, for he ought to be able to answer questions about the dialect of Simonides."

Because they come from the same town. Yes.

Student: "What did he mean, Prodicus, by the term difficult? Evil, said Prodicus."

You see. Yes, go on.

Student: "And therefore, I said, Prodicus, he blames Pittacus for saying, It is difficult to be good just as if that were equivalent to saying, It is evil to be good."

Yes, isn't that beautiful? Now, Socrates says then, difficult means bad and Simonides said of course then, or rather Pittacus said then that virtue is bad. I will give you

one parallel which shows you that this is not a mere joke. In the Republic, in the second book, Adeimantus' long speech, 364a, he says, "consider further, Socrates, another kind of language about justice and injustice employed by both laymen and poets. All with one accord reiterate that moderation and justice are fair and honorable, but, to be sure, difficult and laborious; while licentiousness and injustice are pleasant and easy to win." So, there we are. That is, praise of virtue demands that one say that virtue is easy, i.e. pleasant. If you say virtue is difficult, i.e. unpleasant, then you drive people away from the pursuit of virtue. Surely this parallel from the Republic shows that there is much more to that than the mere attempt to parody Prodicus. We will take this up next time.

You see here, again, in this passage, how close Socrates is to Prodicus. I mean that is not intimacy but Socrates is much closer to Prodicus than to any other sophist. And, within limits and to some extent, Socrates has nothing about the concern of Prodicus with making nice distinctions which doesn't prevent him from ridiculing him frequently as if it were a kind of mere mannerism of Prodicus.

So, I had hoped we could read much more today because we must finish the reading of the dialogue. Well, let us hope that we can do that next time. Good.

Plato's Protagoras. A Course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science at the
University of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 12, May 5, 1965

Well, we have a lot to read and I figured out that if we read more than talk we can finish it in time. But if not, since I owe you at least a half meeting, I can make it a whole and add it at the end.

Now I would like to mention the thing which we must remember in order to understand today's reading; Socrates' interpretation of the poem by Simonides. First, the result of the debate between Socrates and Protagoras. This must be perfectly clear in your minds. [Goes to the board] There was a type of rule that justice was equal to piety and there was a kind of rule that moderation is equal to wisdom. And then Socrates tried to prove that justice is equal to moderation but this didn't work out as you remember. So this is the obvious difficulty under which we labor still.

Now in the litigation scene, Socrates achieves his victory, i.e. he brings about what is good for him, i.e. he is moderate or wise in the sense in which these terms are used here. Well, but he achieved this by acting unjustly. Yet his unjust actions have a just motivation, namely, for the sake of Hippocrates, you remember that.

Now Socrates' interpretation of Simonides' poem contains a further exploration of the relation between moderation, we could even say prudence to make quite clear what it is, and justice. Now Socrates had shown that, contrary to Protagoras' assertion, Simonides does not contradict himself by saying that to become virtuous or good is hard. He had just asserted that according to Simonides hard means bad and it follows from this that, according to Simonides, it means becoming virtuous is bad, a most shocking point.

All right, at this point we begin--341d2--when Protagoras replies.

Student: "which in a Lesbian, who has..."

No, is this the point? Let me see. Here "you are entirely mistaken."

Student: "You are entirely mistaken, Prodicus, said Protagoras; and I know very well that Simonides in using the word difficult meant what all of us mean, not evil, but that which is not easy--that which takes a great deal of trouble.

I said: I also incline to believe, Protagoras...

No, wait a moment first. Simonides did not understand by hard what is bad, but, what is not easy, but, what comes about through many troubles. In other words, the hard is the

troublesome. But, of course, the troublesome is one kind of the bad. This, however, is not elaborated in the sequel. The main point is, superficially at least, that Protagoras denies what Prodicus says. And now what does Socrates say?

Student: "I also incline to believe, Protagoras, that this was the meaning of Simonides, of which our friend Prodicus was very well aware, but he thought that he would make fun, and see if you could maintain your thesis; for that Simonides could never have meant the other is clearly proved by the context, in which he says that God only has this gift. Now, he cannot surely mean to say that to be good is evil, when he afterwards proceeds to say that a God only has this gift, and that this is the attribute of him and of no other. For if this be his meaning, Prodicus would impute to Simonides a character of recklessness which is very unlike his fellow citizens."

Yes, well, literally, "Prodicus would call Simonides unrestrained," which is used here as the opposite of moderate.

Now, Socrates says, then, Socrates admits that Prodicus had been teasing Protagoras but which means in fact that he, Socrates, had been teasing him. Because Socrates was the first to say that. So, Protagoras has won a victory which is not a victory. I mean, if you show that what someone said in joke is not true, you have not refuted him.

Now Socrates goes on, if Prodicus were correct, Simonides would have said that the God is bad, which he could not possibly have said since he was a moderate man. There are two oaths in the neighborhood of this whole God question as we have seen thus far. But against this we must observe the following point: Simonides does not deny the identity of the hard with the bad, by asserting that virtue is difficult, hence, bad for man while it is easy and hence good for the gods.

Socrates here, in this whole connection, gratuitously imputes Simonides' view that virtue is bad and that the God is bad, but, he drops it immediately.

Now, you wanted to say something?

Student: I couldn't follow this section because I don't... Socrates seems to be saying that Simonides was saying that to be good is bad; whereas he seems to have dropped altogether the distinction between becoming and being.

Yes, sure, that is clear. It will be taken up later but that is here a mystery.

Now there is also this funny thing that Prodicus would call Simonides unrestrained and in no way a man from , in no way a fellow citizen. And which is in Greek, as we have

seen, the same word as citizen. Now the funny thing is that Simonides was, most of his lifetime was away from his polis. But let us go on.

Student: "And I should like to tell you, I said, what I imagine to be the real meaning of Simonides in this poem, if you will test what, in your way of speaking, would be called my skill in poetry; or, if you would rather, I will be the listener."

The listener to Protagoras. Yes.

Student: "To this proposal Protagoras replied: As you please;-- and Hippias, Prodicus, and the others told me by all means to do as I proposed."

Why they changed the order from Prodicus, Hippias to Hippias, Prodicus is one of these things, these riddles.

So, let us see where we stand now. Prodicus seems to have won the argument in substance; for this distinction between being and becoming is all but forgotten here. But Simonides deprives Protagoras of the fruit of his victory; for contrary to the agreement, Socrates will now engage in a long speech. He completely disregards the agreement, the law, the nomos. He acts on the view which he imputes to Simonides, that immoral view. I hope this is clear--there should be no long speeches any more. The law was framed with a view to Protagoras' inclination, but, of course, being a law it applies to Socrates as well. And Socrates is the one who disregards it. Now it is a very long speech and let us read quite a chunk of it.

Student: "Then now, I said, I will endeavour to explain to you my opinion about this poem of Simonides. There is a very ancient philosophy which is more cultivated in Crete and Lacedaemon than in any other part of Hellas, and there are more philosophers in those countries than anywhere else in the world."

More sophists. "And the largest number of sophists is in that country."

Student: "This, however, is a secret which these people deny; and they pretend to be ignorant, just because they do not wish to have it thought that they excel the other Hellenes by reason of their wisdom, like the Sophists of whom Protagoras was speaking, but that they surpass the rest by reason of their fighting ability and their courage; considering that if the reason of their superiority were disclosed, all men would be practising their wisdom."

"Would practice that," namely, wisdom. Yes.

Student: "And this secret of theirs has never been discovered by the imitators of Lacedaemonian fashions in other cities, who go about with their...

In other words, he speaks of this fashion and Socrates would appear to be one of these imitators himself. I mean, he was regarded as such by people who did not make the necessary distinctions. Yes, now, Socrates was a conservative, to use present day terminology, the imitators were conservative; hence, Socrates was an imitator exactly like those people. If one would, say, identify Senator Dirksen with Robert Welch it would be the same thing. Good.

Student: "who go about with their ears bruised in imitation of them, and have the caestus bound on their arms and are always in training, and wear short cloaks; for they imagine that these are the practices which have enabled the Lacedaemonians to conquer the other Hellenes. Now, when the Lacedaemonians want to unbend and hold free conversation with their sophists, and are no longer satisfied with mere secret intercourse, they drive out all these laconizers,...

No, "they make an expulsion of foreigners," which was a practice of the Lacedaemonians, the Spartans, for which they were well known. At certain times they drove out all foreigners and, of course, particularly those who want to imitate them. Yes.

Student: "and any other foreigners who may happen to be in their country, and they hold a philosophical...

No, "in secrecy from the foreigners, they come together with the sophists."

Student: "and they themselves forbid their young men to go out into other cities--in this they are like the Cretans--in order that they might not unlearn the lessons which they have taught them."

Yes, "which the sophists teach them." Now, this is a very strange thing. Socrates says here that there is a secret philosophy-sophistry, the terms are used synonymously, in Sparta; also in Crete because they were two cities, communities, which had much in common, but the emphasis is on Sparta. Their sophistry, not their manliness or courage, is the secret reason for the Spartans superior military ability. Now this implies of course, in the first place, a distinction between

wisdom and courage; and remember that we have to think of the unity of all virtues. This distinction does not, of course, necessarily mean that they are separable, but that they are different. And the Spartans conceal their wisdom. There is a Greek word for concealing one's wisdom, although that is not the original meaning, and that is irony. The Spartans are fundamentally ironical people.

Now Sparta is, of course, not a democracy. It is also against foreigners, as you see from this institution. A true city is a closed society. Socrates rejects the notion implicitly of Hippias of the universal society consisting only of all wise men. A true society is a closed society and not democratic. Socrates is clearly at variance with Athenian legality: if one cannot be in agreement with the legality, why one does not accept the principle of legitimacy underlying that particular legality. Is it clear? Because laws are democratic and so on and so on. And philosophy is used here synonymously with sophistry as you have seen.

Now we come to the main point. Socrates opposes here in this speech, above all, Protagoras. The true sophists of old were not the men whom Protagoras had mentioned in 316. Protagoras has one kind of spiritual ancestry, which he had mentioned there. Here we hear of Socrates' spiritual ancestry. Socrates' spiritual ancestry is philosophic and political whereas the ancestry of Protagoras is wholly non-political as you would see if you would look at the list.

Now the relation of the philosophic to the political corresponds to the relation between the philosophic and gymnastics as you see here or the relation between the mind and the body. The assumption that the fundamental distinction between human activity is based on the mind-body distinction is at the same time the philosophy-politics distinction. The sentence may be unclear but the fundamental distinction on which Plato's work as a whole is based is that the distinction between respectable human activities is that of philosophy and politics. I mean, not as we would think today. We would say what about religion, what about art, what about economics?

Now, what is the justification of this view? Every society is what it is by virtue of that to which it looks up. That is the basic principle. Today liberal democracy versus communism. The first answer given by anyone who is asked the difference would be that stands for this and the other stands for that. But that which it stands for is, of course, that to which it looks up. But that to which a society looks up may be a matter of knowledge and then it is the true good. That would be wonderful. Or it may be a matter of mere opinion. This includes the case that all opinions acceptable to society happen to be identical with what is known as true to those who think because a true opinion

is still an opinion. It is not the same as knowledge. We are back to this then that the distinction between knowledge and opinion somehow corresponds to the distinction between mind and body. This is very strange at first hearing. I will give you only one modern illustration taken from Hegel. Hegel used the German word for opinion and by a pun traced to the German possessive pronoun mine; opinion comes from what is only mine not universal.

The ultimate basis of this Platonic view is that what is private, what is strictly speaking mine, is a body.

I cannot now take up the question of where religion, art, and economics would belong according to this scheme. I will only say this that from the classical point of view what we call economics would be subpolitical and still more sub-philosophic whereas art and religion is somehow between the political and the philosophic. But this only in passing.

Now let us go on. This much we must keep in mind; he is speaking here of his intellectual ancestors. That this is ironical goes without saying because everything said is ironical and only by thinking through can we distinguish between the ironical and nonironical. But even the ironical of course is never without its seriousness. In other words here underlies seriousness as we will see. Now let us go on.

Student: "And in Lacedaemon and Crete not only men but also women have a pride in their high level of education."

Which foreshadows in a way the Republic.

Student: "And hereby you may know that I am right in attributing to the Lacedaemonians this excellence in philosophy and discourse: If a man converses with the most ordinary Lacedaemonian, he will find him seldom good for much in general conversation, but at any point in the discourse he will inject some notable saying, short and terse, with unerring aim; and the person with whom he is talking seems to be like a child in his hands. And many of our own age and of former ages have noted that the true Lacedaemonian type of character has the love of wisdom even stronger than the love of physical exercise;...

Yes, true laconizing is much more philosophizing than love of gymnastics. Yes.

Student: "they are conscious that only a perfectly educated man is capable of uttering such expressions."

Socrates has made an assertion without any support and now he gives us the sign of the fact that the Spartans philosophize; the ability to say something well in terse

sentences. Now we can also say, in short sentences; brevity of speech, laconic as it is called. Laconic expression is a sign of deep thought. So, in other words, we see now a bit better why this is Socrates' ancestry because Socrates is enamoured of short speeches and Protagoras is enamoured of long speeches. Yes, now?

Student: "Such were Thales of Miletus, and Pittacus of Mitylene, and Bias of Priene, and our own Solon, and Cleobulus the Lindian, and Myson the Chenian; and seventh in the catalogue of wise men was the Lacedaemonian Chilo."

Yes, "and the seventh among them, said, was the Lacedaemonian Chilo." So, in other words, it was not asserted that he was, but said. These are the seven wise men. There are various catalogues of them and there are differences which we cannot go into.

Now Socrates' ancestry is more directly the seven wise men of old. But as is indicated by the different treatment of the Spartan among them, this is not strikingly obvious. You see that Socrates, being an Athenian, assigns the central place to the Athenian legislator Solon. He was one of the wise men; whether Chilon was one of them is not quite clear. Yes.

Student: "All these were lovers and emulators and disciples of the culture of the Lacedaemonians, and any one may..."

So, in other words, although none of them, so to speak, was a Spartan, Socrates maintains they all are pupils of true Spartanism, true Laconism, Yes.

Student: "and any one may perceive that their wisdom was of this character; consisting of short memorable sentences, which they severally uttered. And they met together and dedicated in the temple of Apollo at Delphi, as the first fruits of their wisdom, the far-famed inscriptions, which are in all men's mouths,--"know thyself," and "nothing in excess."

Why do I say all this? I am explaining that this Lacedaemonian brevity was the style of ancient philosophy. Now there was a saying of Pittacus which was privately circulated and received the approbation of the wise, "difficult is it to be good." And Simonides, who was ambitious of the fame of wisdom, was aware that if he could overthrow this saying, then, as if he had won a victory over some famous athlete, he would carry off the palm among his contemporaries. And if I am not mistaken, he composed the entire poem with the secret intention of damaging

Pittacus and his saying."

Yes, now Pittacus, that man opposed by Simonides, is one of the seven; he belongs to Socrates' ancestry. Simonides opposes Pittacus and Simonides belongs to Protagoras' ancestry as you can see if you look up the passage in 316. The natural thing for Socrates to do would be to take the side of Pittacus who belongs to his ancestry and criticize Simonides as Protagoras did. But he does the opposite. Why? Well, because Protagoras had criticized Simonides and Socrates wishes to defeat Protagoras; for the sake of Hippocrates, of course. Or, if there is a fundamental difference between Protagoras and his spiritual ancestor Simonides--indeed there is. According to Protagoras, Simonides belongs to the sophists of old who conceal their being sophists whereas Protagoras is the first to speak up, the first that was not concealed.

And now we get first this general picture. All sophist-philosophers of old, whether the Socratic ancestry or the Protagorean ancestry, were concealers. But there were two kinds of them, the laconizers and the makers of long speeches. Now by coming to the assistance of Pittacus or Simonides Socrates comes to the assistance of the concealers. This much is clear, against the enlighteners, as we can say. Now we have to see in the sequel why Socrates comes to the assistance of Simonides and not of Pittacus who, after all, was a concealer also.

But already now this question arises: Is there any connection between the issue of concealment-enlightenment and the question regarding virtue or the teachability of virtue or the unity of virtue? I mean it would be strange in a Platonic dialogue if this were a mere haphazard insertion and there were not a connection between the two things. We will find the solution, I hope, when we go on. Now.

Student: "Let us all unite in examining his poem, and see..."

No, Socrates says, "all shall investigate." He had said formerly, all shall act as supervisors of Socrates and Protagoras, in 358e. But this is, of course, something slightly different from supervising. But they should indeed try, one can say to that extent Socrates means it quite literally, everyone should try to watch what Socrates is doing with the best of his powers. Good. Now begin again with that sentence.

Student: "All shall unite in investigating the poem, and see whether I am speaking the truth. Simonides must have been a lunatic, if, in the very first words of the poem, wanting to say only that to become good is hard, he inserted , "on the one hand" ["on the one hand to become good is hard"]; there would be no reason for the introduction of , unless you

suppose him...

Of course that is the Greek word, don't misunderstand, which normally asks for a corresponding . Socrates, on the one hand, said this; Protagoras, on the other hand, said that. But we cannot possibly go into elementary Greek grammar here. Good.

Student: "there would be no reason for the introduction of , unless you suppose him to speak with a hostile reference to the words of Pittacus. Pittacus is saying "Difficult is it to be good," and he, in refutation of this thesis, rejoins that the truly difficult thing, Pittacus, is to become good, not joining "truly" with "good," but with "difficult." Not, that the hard thing is to be truly good, as though there were some truly good men, and there were others who were good but not truly good (this would be a very naive observation, and quite unworthy of Simonides);...

No, it would be very stupid, "stupid." Needless to say Socrates uses more than once this distinction between the truly good and the good where there is a question whether he is truly good. And I mean this is quite obviously a joke. Go on.

Student: "but you must suppose him to make a poetic trajectory of the word "truly"; construing the saying of Pittacus thus (and let us imagine Pittacus to be speaking and Simonides answering him): "O my friends," says Pittacus,...

No, "all human beings." Being a poet he addresses the whole human race.

Student: "O ye human beings," says Pittacus, "difficult is it to be good," and Simonides answers, "In that, Pittacus, you are mistaken; the difficulty is not to be good, but on the one hand, to become good, four-square in hands and feet and mind, wrought without a flaw--that is difficult truly."

This is, as you see, a quotation from the poem of Simonides. Yes.

Student: "This way of reading the passage accounts for the insertion of , "on the one hand," and for the position at the end of the clause of the word "truly," and all that follows shows this to be the meaning. A great deal might be said to demonstrate

the excellent composition of each detail of the poem which is a charming piece of workmanship, and very finished, but such minutiae would be tedious. I should like, however, to point out the general outline and the intention of the poem, which is certainly designed in every part to be a refutation of the saying of Pittacus."

Yes, you see the key point here: Simonides asserts against Pittacus that not being good but becoming good is hard. We have seen this issue before. That is to say, Socrates uses the distinction between being and becoming, to which he had referred in what we had read last time, again. Yes, I mean up to this point we haven't heard anything new as far as the fundamental question is concerned. Now?

Student: "For he speaks in what follows a little bit further on as if he meant to argue prosaically that although there truly is a difficulty in becoming good, yet this is possible for a time, and only for a time. But having become good, to remain in a good state and be good, as you, Pittacus, affirm, is not possible, and is not granted to man; a god only has this blessing; "but man cannot help being bad when the force of circumstances overpowers him."

Now Socrates, you see here, does not continue as he did in the former passage, 340b, that according to Simonides being good in contradistinction to becoming good is easy. You remember that was the point there. In other words after you have acquired the habit of self-control it is easy to be self-controlled. On the contrary, he says now, being good, i.e. always remaining good, is impossible--a radically different interpretation. For man depends too much on fate. Good.

Now let us see what this leads up to.

Student: "Now, whom does the force of circumstances overpower in the command of a vessel? Not the layman, for he is always overpowered; and as one...

"He is already overpowered to begin with," yes, because of his complete ignorance.

Student: "and as one who is already prostrate cannot be overthrown, and only he who is standing upright but not he who is prostrate can be laid prostrate, so the force of circumstances can only overpower him who, at some time or other, has resources, and not him who is at all times helpless. The descent of a great storm may make the pilot helpless, or the severity of the season the farmer or the physician;

for the good may become bad,...

Yes, now wait a moment here. Now you see only experts only resourceful men can be overthrown; the others are not even capable of being overthrown. And he gives three examples: the farmer who is overcome by a heavy season or a hard season. You see very clearly it has the meaning of bad so that Socrates' point that hard is a kind of bad is again restored. Yes.

Student: "for the good may become bad, as another poet witnesses:--

"The good are sometimes good and sometimes bad." But the bad does not become bad; he is necessarily always bad. So that when the force of circumstances overpowers the man of resources and wisdom and virtue, then he cannot help being bad. And you Pittacus, are saying, "Difficult is it to be good." Now there is a difficulty in becoming good; and yet this is possible: but to be good is an impossibility--
"For he who does well is the good man, and he who does ill is the bad."

Yes, now to what extent a good man as such will be good or bad depends on how he does, which in Greek is an ambiguous term which may mean how he acts and how he fares. But here the emphasis is on the second meaning; he depends on his fate, on chance. For example, we have seen examples, the heavy season or storms. We may also say, in this context, it depends on nature. Or to use a formula which Plato uses in the Laws, man is a plaything of the gods. This is not the whole story of Plato but that is part of it. The passages in the Laws, if you want to look them up are in 644d and 803c. No, if this is so, if man's goodness or badness depends entirely on his fate, what will become of education? After all, we must never forget the context. Well, the answer is given in the sequel.

Student: "But what constitutes doing well in writing and what sort of activity makes a man good in writing? Clearly, learning it.

"The learning of letters," yes.

Student: "And what sort of well-doing makes a man a good physician? Clearly the learning of the art of healing the sick. "But he who does ill is the bad." Now, who becomes a bad physician? Clearly he who is in the first place a physician, and in the second place a good physician; for he may become a bad one also: but none of us unskilled individuals can by

any amount of doing ill become physicians, any more than we can become carpenters or anything of that sort; and he who by doing ill cannot become a physician. In like manner the good may become bad by time, or toil, or disease, or other accident (the only real doing ill is to be deprived of knowledge), but the bad man will never become bad, for he is always bad; and if he were to become bad, he must previously have been good."

Now let us stop here for a moment. Now we have the question, man's goodness or badness depends on his fate. And then what becomes of education? Here we have the answer. Virtue is knowledge or at least vice is lack of knowledge. And, of course, knowledge is acquired by learning, by a form of education. But, and now comes the key point, whether we can or cannot acquire learning, and having acquired it, keep it, exercise it does not depend on us. While pure virtue is knowledge, knowledge is not omnipotent. This makes sense as far as it goes but it is one of these difficulties.

Let us take the physician, a top physician, and he is confronted with a hopeless case that he cannot heal; or he is a surgeon getting a heart attack while operating on a patient. Does he become by either of these two facts a bad physician? Nonsense, these are the limits of his art. So there is a difficulty here which will be cleared up, I think, in the sequel. Yes, now let us go on.

Student: "Thus the words of the poem tend to show that on the one hand a man cannot be continuously good, but that he may become good and may also become bad; and again that

"They are the best for the longest time
whom the gods love."

That seems also to be a quotation from a poem, probably from Simonides but not certainly. So, whether a man is good or bad in a given case depends on chance, on things beyond his control,; depends on the gods. It has nothing to do with his previous virtue, according to the statement here. "Those men are best, for most of the time, whom the gods love." Now that is not irrelevant in the context of this discussion. Does it imply that those men are worse whom the gods hate? At any rate it would seem that if virtue depends on the fate of the gods, one must try to gain their favor. And how is that activity of gaining the favor of the gods called?

Student: Religion or piety.

Piety. And this is then, of course, something different from justice. And this we must not forget. Yes, now let us go

on.

Student: "All this relates to Pittacus, as the sequel makes clear."

All this is said with a view to Pittacus or against Pittacus. Yes.

Student: "For he adds:--

"Therefore I will not throw away my span of life to no purpose in searching after the impossible, hoping in vain to find a perfectly faultless man among those who partake of the fruit of the broad-bosomed earth: if I find him, I will send you word."

Now, in other words, that is clearly jocular. No man can be bad because man is too much dependent on things...no, no, no man can be simply good because man is too dependent on circumstances beyond his control. Yes?

Student: "(this is the vehement way in which he pursues his attack upon Pittacus throughout the whole poem):

"But him who does no evil, voluntarily I praise and love; --not even the gods war against necessity."

All this has a similar drift,...

Yes, but clearly the gods alone--to come back to this question he raised before--do not control man's fate; man's fate depends, in the last analysis, on necessity, with which even the gods cannot fight. We can also say he depends on nature. Which consequences this has regarding the status of piety is in no way developed. But this is a thought which one must consider. Now?

Student: "All this has a similar drift, for Simonides was not so ignorant as to say that he praised those who did no evil voluntarily, as though there were some who did evil voluntarily. For no wise man, as I believe, will allow that any human being errs voluntarily, or voluntarily does evil and base actions; but they are very well aware that all who do evil and base things do them against their will."

"Involuntarily," yes. Yes?

Student: Is necessity the same as chance?

No, it is different from chance. Because what is by necessity is, of course, not by chance. Well, there is a

large variety of meanings. For example, insofar as chance is understood primarily in contradistinction to art, and what is not guaranteed by the art is to that extent a matter of chance. For example, you plant a plum tree and you do it according to the rules of tree-planting, the art of tree-planting, but you have no guarantee what the weather will be. Yet this weather business is a natural thing. Although impossible to predict, making a long range prediction, it is natural.

Now here is this passage to which we come now; is a necessary consequence of the identification of virtue with knowledge or of vice with ignorance. If this is so, no one does the bad or base voluntarily. Is this clear? I mean to be vicious, to do bad and base things, must be traced to ignorance because vice is fundamentally ignorance. This statement of Socrates, for which he is very well known, that virtue is knowledge has a great range of meaning and to give you only one extreme indicated by Marlowe in his Jew of Malta when he makes Machiavelli, of all people, say, "I hold there is no sin but ignorance." Now Socrates meant it differently than Marlowe's Machiavelli but still this also must be considered.

No one chooses the bad and the base knowingly, voluntarily. But if he chooses it, he chooses it compelled by his ignorance. The bad or base appears to him as good and he cannot but strive for what appears to him as good. And he has to learn that there are other things that are good, which are better, and in the light of which these apparant goods would then appear to be evil. But he has to learn it, so his ignorance is to blame.

Now this case, of the man who does bad things, compelled by ignorance, is obviously different from that of the physician who collapses while operating on a sick man. Because that physician does not act badly from ignorance but is compelled to act badly by his body, by the collapse. Is it not clear? Yes?

Student: But is there a reconciliation of these two things; being good is impossible and vice proceeds from ignorance, if we say that the conditions of ignorance or knowledge are not under human control.

Yes, all right, but still what does it mean to say, in the case of the physician or farmer or any other artisan that he acted badly if something which has nothing to do with this art as art and with his competence as competence interferes with it?

We are not yet at the end. These are two kinds of...that is, the over-all assertion is that there is no man who doesn't sin, there is no man however good who does not do badly from time to time. There are people who always do badly, that is granted; which is, of course, an exaggeration

otherwise they could not possibly live. But there is no man who always does well. But there are various kinds of this not doing well as is indicated by the pilot whose art is thwarted by a storm which could not possibly have been foreseen. If it could have been foreseen, it was his fault to leave the harbor. But that is, of course, an assumption. And in the case of the man who does something bad, wicked, low, because he didn't ever learn the rudiments of decent conduct. But this is not exhausted, there are other cases. Yes?

Student: Is this a way of distinguishing the knowledge of virtue from the knowledge of art. One is a general kind of knowledge for which a man is ignorant...a man acts badly through ignorance but it is a different kind of ignorance of a pilot.

Yes, but, Plato was surely aware of the difference between what Aristotle later on came to call practical wisdom on the one hand and art on the other. But there is no indication that he has this in mind here. I means he leaves it simply as the sweeping identification of virtue and knowledge and leaves it to us, at least here in the dialogue, to figure out what that means. And in the most common and striking examples of knowledge are the arts; a man who is capable of giving a perfectly clear account of what he is doing.

Student: Well, then, on the surface there is a great identity between virtue and the arts.

Sure! I mean that is one of the most striking things in the so-called early dialogues of Plato. The first book of the Republic, the refutation of Thrasymachus for example, turns entirely on this. Yes, but we must first see another case of doing badly which is discussed in the sequel where we left off.

Student: "And Simonides never says that he praises him who does no evil voluntarily; the word "voluntarily" applies to him self."

So you see, of course, a wholly arbitrary interpretation of the poem. But we don't have to worry about that. Because Socrates will say later on that this whole business of interpretation of poems is irrelevant. We come to that later. Yes.

Student: "For he was under the impression that a good man might compel himself to love and praise another, and to be the friend and approver of another; and that there might be an enforced love, such as a

man might feel to an unnatural father or mother, or country, or the like."

"Parliament," yes.

Student: "Now, bad men, when their parents or country have any defects, look on them with malignant joy, and find fault with them and..."

Yes, well, "gladly," "gladly."

Student: "expose and demounce them to others, under the idea that the rest of mankind will be less likely to take themselves to task and accuse them of neglect; and they blame their defects far more than they deserve, in order that the odium which is necessarily incurred by them may be increased: but the good man dissembles his feelings, and constrains himself to praise them; and if they have wronged him and he is angry, he pacifies his anger..."

Let me again repeat it, "with his parents or the father."

Student: "he pacifies his anger and is reconciled, and compels himself to love and praise his own flesh and blood."

Yes, well, flesh and blood is a bit too strong here. Now we have another different case here which is the most important as we shall see. Here we have a good man who acts well; who acts well as you see, knowingly, but through self-compulsion. That is to say, we have here a case where a man does these things knowingly but not voluntarily, not gladly. Now what is this case? This action of this decent man is good if unpleasing. It consists in concealing his low thing, in compulsorily loving and praising--that is an entirely different case. In the two former cases we had, first, someone acting badly under compulsion by fate. And then we had the case of acting badly under compulsion by ignorance. But here there is no such compulsion, at least not visibly; especially because there is no bad action at all. He acts well. That it is unfortunate to have undesirable parents is true but does not in itself affect the moral character of the action. This is a clear case of acting well and knowing, which is not acting voluntarily in the sense of gladly. And we see here a kind of presupposition that the best actions are those which are intrinsically good and at the same time done gladly.

But why does this decent man who conceals the deficiencies of his parents, or of his father rather; why does he do that? What is his motivation?

Student: Justice?

Yes. But I think we would say today, first, but meaning the same thing, from a sense of duty. But that is in Greek from justice, the right and proper thing to do. And you will see that he speaks also of the wicked would gladly accuse their fathers whereas the good man would do it only with great misgivings. And even if he would, he would not openly accuse him. The problem of the Crito is present in this.

One can here raise, of course, this other question: does Socrates in particular hide the wickedness of Athens? In the Gorgias, he does the opposite. He brings out that all these great men, well not all, but this kind of man, that they are very bad. Now in the sequel, in the next few lines, we will get the solution of our riddle. But in order to understand it let us see whether the riddle is understood. But you seem to be on the verge of a remark!

Student: Well, I've tried to avoid questions...

Well, I have a much better judgment of what we can realistically cover than I did at the beginning of this course so go ahead.

Student: [faintly audible] If you lived at a time when laws are considered to be broken without much restraint if they are in the opinion of the breaker unjust. And we live in a time when we see extremely unjust laws raped by certain people. So one wonders when you read something like Socrates who might have broken the law once or twice...

There is, of course, a great difference between breaking the law and openly breaking it because of an injustice. That is a just man would, I suppose, openly break it, if he breaks it only because of its intrinsic injustice. Now if someone makes a false tax declaration, also thinking that there should not be such a terrible tax, his justice may well be questioned. Because there are other ways of showing that one disapproves of that law.

Student: What about extremely unjust parents and fathers?

That is such a question of very great delicacy; and there are apparently some limits beyond which respect is no longer possible. And that is a very bad situation. But still I would say the situation is different if the people concerned are not parents or whether they are some other people. Surely that is a question here. Locke discusses it in his way in the civil government section, part two when he speaks of the family. Well, I have stated this at some length in my chapter on Locke in Natural Right and History. But this is surely a question. I mean the commandment honor

father and mother leads to difficulty in such extreme cases. And whether the fatherland has the same status in these matters, especially from a biblical point of view, is, of course, a long question. But Socrates states it in the Crito: if he had disapproved of Athens thoroughly, radically, he could have immigrated from Athens to another city. But by staying there, he admitted that Athens was, at least, tolerably good.

Now what is the problem with which we are concerned? Simonides is made to say that being good, i.e. always being good, is impossible. But how good or bad a man can be depends on his fate. And by this he does not merely mean social conditions, that goes without saying. He means at least as much the natural conditions. But the examples which we receive, which were given to us,--the man, the physician who kills a man on whom he operates because he, the physician, suffers a heart attack. Obviously one cannot blame him as a physician for that. And the other case where someone does something wrong from sheer ignorance; and it is perfectly possible to say that according to Socrates' simple assertion it is always innocent because ignorance here means ignorance of the law. Then he cannot be blamed for that. But here we have a different case, a case of the decent son of the parents or the father who from decency, from justice, conceals the defects of his parents or his father. And, yet, of course, the whole thing is distasteful to him. Where does the badness of the action come in? Unless you would identify the good with the pleasant; hitherto we have not yet arrived to do so. Now let us read the sequel.

Student: "And Simonides, as is probable, considered that he himself had often had to praise and magnify a tyrant or the like, not of his own free will but by such constraint..."

"But under compulsion." Here we have the solution of the riddle. Here, Simonides, a good man acting badly and knowingly; he knew that this tyrant was an abominable scoundrel, but, not voluntarily i.e. not gladly. Now, such a man can, of course, justly be blamed in the language of our century as a collaborator. Why did he do that? Praising a tyrant and others of the same stamp is simply bad. He does not have the excuse which the son has or the citizen of the country. The blamable badness consists in concealing the badness of the bad; he presents the tyrant as a wonderful man and he knows that he is the opposite of wonderful. Now what is the motive of Simonides and such like people? He did it under compulsion. Yes?

Student: Maybe he wanted to make the tyrant less bad.

Yes, but the more obvious thing is, of course, what? I mean we know a bit how people behave...

Student: To refrain from killing Simonides.

Here, here. Lack of courage. So this would indicate, at least, as we have seen on another occasion, that wisdom and courage do not necessarily come together, as common sense tells us anyway. But since we are here confronted with Socrates' thesis that all virtues are inseparable this has a great weight. Yes?

Student: [inaudible--something to do with fear being rational.]

Yes, but it must be out of fear to do bad or disgraceful things. That is the question. So, in other words, if someone runs away from a tiger then he doesn't do anything disgraceful; he does something reasonable. But if he runs away from the enemy, and if he is a soldier,--the enemy may be much more dangerous than the tiger but the greater danger of the enemy is no excuse. You see also that in this case, which is the decisive case because this is the case where Simonides himself is involved, there is nothing of self-compulsion--that he compelled himself--he was compelled by others, by the tyrants and so on.

Now Simonides, surely, no matter what the Spartans might have thought about him, regards wisdom separable from courage or manliness and Socrates seems to agree here.

Now there is something else involved which is more important and that is that there is a difference between the good and the pleasant. What the son did to his parents was good but very unpleasant. But this leads us to a distinction between two kinds of virtue. Generally speaking, the good is identical with the pleasant and those in which, generally speaking, the good differs from the pleasant. In other words, those virtues in which voluntarialists predominate and those in which compulsion predominates. I remind you of the emphasis put on compulsion and punishment in Protagoras' account of political virtue. And I suggest now this link-up between what we are reading now and the context of the dialogue.

[Goes to the board] Perhaps Socrates' inability to prove this identity is connected with the fact that this kind of virtue is of a different kind--that one of them is essentially voluntary and the other is essentially compulsive. I remind you of the compulsory character of the whole dialogue; Socrates compelled by Hippocrates, by his responsibility in regard to Hippocrates, by his justice, by his sense of duty. Yes?

Student: I don't understand. You mean that justice and piety are more compulsory than moderation and wisdom on the other hand?

Yes, according to Simonides view, I believe.

Student: Well, can you really distinguish moderation that way when you say that...

Well, there is another way of showing that, for example, from a different point of view. The virtues which have naturally pleasant consequences and the opposite vices which have naturally unpleasant consequences. You know, justice is more important here in this connection; the question of piety is only touched upon. And, you know, the simple example if you overeat, there may not be any witnesses and you may be alone on an island...

Student: Yes, I see the point...

You get this, well, I believe it is connected with that. And now let us make a somewhat broader reflection at this point.

Socrates is engaged in a contest with Protagoras. What seemed to be a mere attempt to elicit from Protagoras some information about his curriculum and the fees for Hippocrates turns into a contest with Protagoras. Now here Socrates vindicates Simonides' critique of Pittacus against Protagoras' critique. But in doing so he shows the difference between these two kinds of virtue.

Now there was another difference between Socrates and Protagoras which came to our attention today; partly before. Socrates stands for short speeches; Protagoras stands for long speeches. And we have now gotten a different indication from Socrates' long speech about laconism. The difference is that between speaking disguisedly as most of Socrates' ancestry did and Protagoras' ancestry and speaking frankly as Protagoras claimed to do.

Now the link-up between the two points, I believe, is this. The question of how to speak--frankly or disguisedly--provides the example which shows the difference between the two groups of virtue. If we disregard entirely the consideration of justice, it is natural that you speak frankly--you say how you feel--that is a good thing. But, then, the considerations of the feelings of others, the consideration of justice limit what we can frankly do.

Now it would be good if we could complete our reading of this part. Virtue is knowledge. There is some agreement as to this between Socrates and Protagoras and sophists in general. But the key point, which Socrates makes, is the limited power of knowledge--not merely with regard to seasons and tempests but also and above all against the power of the unwise. This is Aristotle's diagnosis of the fundamental mistake of the sophists toward the end of the Ethics; that the sophists reduced political science to rhetoric, the art of making speeches because they believed that making speeches

was enough for governing a multitude.

Here, at this point, is where the problem of justice becomes acute for the wise man in following form: how should they conduct themselves toward the unwise? Should they try to rule them?--the Republic. Or, should they accept being ruled by the unwise?--that seems to be against nature. But if they accept being ruled by the unwise because of the manifest impossibility of philosophers ever becoming kings that means of course that the question of how to speak becomes a key question. In the felicitous phrase of Mr. Cropsey, "philosophy tenders its tongue and society stays its hand." That is a big deal, in a way the biggest deal that exists. Good.

Now let us try to finish this section where we left off; 346b8.

Student: "and he also wishes to imply to Pittacus that he does not censure him because he is censorious.

"For I am satisfied," he says, "when a man is neither bad nor excessively foolish; and when he knows justice (which is the health of states), and is of sound mind, I will find no fault with him, for I am not given to finding fault, and there are innumerable fools"

(implying that if someone delighted in censure he might have abundant opportunity of finding fault.)

Yes, let us stop here. One must compel oneself to praise; he does not say here to love the unworthy. One must avoid as much as possible blaming the unworthy or the unwise. Now Socrates begins to cover up the difficulty which he had laid bare. One must be satisfied with those who are good, that is to say, that act badly only if compelled to do so by bad luck--which is, of course, a very tall order because how bad does he go? Yes.

Student: "All things are good with which evil is unmingled."

In these latter words he does not mean to say that all things are good which have no evil in them, as you might say "All things are white which have no black in them;" for that would be ridiculous; but he means to say that he accepts and finds no fault with moderate or intermediate state.

["I do not hope," he says, "to find a perfectly blameless man among those who partake of the fruits of the broad-bosomed earth (if I find him, I will send you word); in this sense I praise no man. But he who is moderately good, and does no evil, is good enough for me, who love and approve every one"]

"And does nothing bad." That is another great change which Socrates makes.

Student: "(and here observe that he uses a Lesbian word, [approve], because he is addressing Pittacus,--

"I love and approve every one voluntarily, who does no evil":

and that the stop should be put after "voluntarily"); "but there are some whom I involuntarily praise and love. And you, Pittacus, I would never have blamed, if you had spoken what was moderately good and true; but I do blame you because, putting on the appearance of truth, you are speaking falsely about the highest matters."--And this, I said, Prodicus and Protagoras, I take to be the meaning of Simonides in this poem."

One must be satisfied with, meaning that one must praise gladly, those who are good--i.e. those who do nothing bad. Which implies that there is no necessity of man ever doing anything bad; contrary to what we have heard before. But one must sometimes praise and love involuntarily those who do bad things. Differently stated, one must sometimes act badly by praising and loving those who act badly. The case of legitimate acting badly is that of praising and loving those who illegitimately act badly. That is a complication. In this remark toward the end of this phrase here--"this seems to me Prodicus and Protagoras, said I," that is very emphatic to make clear that now Socrates is speaking. Whereas before when he spoke of I, it was Simonides. So he reminds us of this. Now?

Student: "Hippias said: I think, Socrates, that you have given a very good explanation of the poem; but I have also an excellent interpretation of my own which I will propound to you, if you so desire."

Yes. Socrates had addressed only Protagoras and Prodicus--Protagoras because he had brought up Simonides and Prodicus because he was a countryman of Pittacus, attacked by Simonides. But Hippias feels left out and he tries to muscle in. But a man with much stronger muscles prevents that.

Student: "Nay, Hippias, said Alcibiades; not now, but at some other time. At present we must abide by the compact which was made between Socrates and Protagoras,...

"Now it is just."

Student: "now it is just to abide by the compact which was

made between Socrates and Protagoras, to the effect that as long as Protagoras is willing to ask, Socrates should answer;...

No, more literally, "if Protagoras is still willing to ask."

Student: "if Protagoras is still willing to ask, Socrates should answer; or that if he would rather answer, then that Socrates should ask."

You see it is "still willing" because Protagoras probably got enough!

You see, also, the fact that Alcibiades acts on behalf of justice while usurping the place of chairman. He decides it that Hippias can't say anything and no one had given him that authority. But, we may also say in justification of Alcibiades and Socrates' quasi-love for him that in acting so unjustly he acts wisely. Because this would only be a disturbance.

So, it is evidently clear from the last remark that the whole intermezzo in which Protagoras tried to assert his supremacy and was given the privilege of addressing questions to Socrates is over. Protagoras, completely defeated, especially in the poetry discussion, is defeated on his own ground--because he said I am the bigshot, well, he didn't say that but he meant it--that is my forte. Well, it proved to be his great weakness.

Now Socrates has vindicated Simonides' critique of Pittacus by hook and by crook. He has refuted Protagoras' interpretation and criticism of Simonides' poem. That is clear by now. And now he goes even further in the sequel, which we will discuss next time, he turns now to attacking the very notion of interpretation and criticizing poetry. Protagoras' criticism, literary criticism as we might say, might be bad in this particular case but it might be itself reasonable. Socrates does not leave Protagoras his last refuge. And at this point the last section of the dialogue begins--the last section, under the assumption that this is all proven, the status of the remaining virtue has to be taken up. And that is courage. If these four virtues are all identical with each other, can courage be left in the cold? Of course not, and this leads then to a new discussion and with quite a few amazing happenings.

Is there any points? Yes.

Student: You suggested that courage was different than wisdom in the example of Simonides. That seemed to be slightly different from the case of a son having to praise parents...

The difference is this: if someone is a collaborator,

this is bad. But if someone defends his own country, his own people, against more or less just or unjust attacks, it isn't bad.

Student: Right but why would the two different...

Simonides, in other words, by living with these tyrants and enjoying their dishes, the food and the drink and the monetary rewards, exposed himself to justified criticism--a wise man doesn't do these things. Well, he was a very witty man and made jokes about it. And when he was asked what is better, wealth or wisdom? he said wealth because the wise pounded the doors of the wealthy and not the wealthy the doors of the wise. In other words, he was a man not of the strictest morality, to put it mildly.

Student: Well, maybe this placement by Plato, no, by Socrates, tempers a little bit the criticism he might have of Simonides; for the previous two examples were more justified.

Obviously, and I would say it is the only clear case of someone acting badly and blamably. Because a man who acts badly because of ignorance is not, strictly speaking, blamable. Well, we meet next time.

Lecture 13, May 10, 1965

Well, let's begin. I am not entirely satisfied, to put it mildly, with my interpretation of the Simonides scene which I suggested last time. I shall propose another one which I think is better but quite a few difficulties still remain.

The result of the debate between Socrates and Protagoras on the various virtues was this: justice and piety seem to be, more or less, identical; moderation and wisdom seem to be, more or less, identical. But the two groups, whether or not they are identical remains obscure. In order to simplify the issue, we could say this: the relation of decency and prudence (in the vulgar sense of the word prudence), or, if you please, of honesty and policy. Now when we came to the litigation scene, Socrates proved to be good at winning victories, i.e. to be prudent, but he acted unjustly. But he did this from justice. So, this shows that in one respect honesty is the best policy but they are not identical somehow. And we can say: prudence unequal to justice. Then the Simonides scene: no one is always good; our goodness or badness depends on our fate, therefore, we must not expect too much. The good i.e. the wise, are compelled by fate to act badly from time to time. More particularly, it is our duty sometimes to compel ourselves to praise and love bad superiors--the parents or the fatherland, i.e. to conceal our thoughts and feelings. Justice demands this. But, also, unjust rulers, tyrants, sometimes compel wise men to praise them, i.e. to conceal their thoughts. Prudence demands this. Now the wise are always subject to the unwise, therefore, it must be that they always conceal their thoughts.

Two conclusions grow from this: Protagoras' claim to candor is untenable, as we know anyway; secondly, justice seems to be different from prudence-wisdom. But the distinction between justice and prudence, as developed here, is equivalent to the distinction between self-compulsion, in the case of the parents, and compulsion, in the case of the tyrants. Now is this distinction between self-compulsion and compulsion tenable in the last analysis? If not, justice would be identical with prudence (in the wider sense). There would be the unity of the virtues as Socrates consents. In that case the Simonides section would supply the missing proof of the unity of virtue. But, as I say, I cannot swear that this is the case.

Now let us turn then immediately to the sequel and make a little headway, although we will proceed a little more slowly than we did last time. We left off at 347b7. Alcibiades had just silenced Hippias who wanted to muscle in. Now, yes.

Student: "I said: I wish Protagoras either to ask or answer as he is inclined;..."

Yes. Although it is rather clear that Protagoras had enough of questioning Socrates as well as of being questioned by Socrates, Socrates leaves him the choice--the choice between two evils and one doesn't know which is the greater or lesser evil; and surely a bad spot for a teacher of well-advisedness to be in. Yes.

Student: "but I would rather have done with the poems and odes, if he does not object, and come back to the question about which I was asking you at first, Protagoras, and by your help make an end of that investigation."

Now Socrates proposes then however, on his part, a change of the subject matter; a return to Socrates' subject and an abandonment of Protagoras' subject. Now what is the ground on which he proposes that? that we will see in the sequel.

Student: "The talk about poetry seems to me like a commonplace entertainment at the banquets of the vulgar; who, because they are not able to converse..."

Now, one second here. Now Protagoras' subject is a low thing, as he says now. Socrates is no longer polite. After having defeated Protagoras' particular use of Simonides' poem, he rejects now this whole kind of pursuit. He also, in a way, disowns his own interpretation of Simonides. After proving the impossibility of frankness to unwise rulers, Socrates himself becomes entirely frank to Protagoras, who of course is not his ruler in any sense. Yes? Now he puts it more precisely in the next sequel about these low-class banquets. Yes?

Student: "who, because they are not able to converse or amuse one another, while they are drinking, with the sound of their own voices and conversation..."

No, "nor" would be better. "Neither through themselves nor through their own voice and speeches," yes.

Student: "by reason of their stupidity..."

"Their lack of education."

Student: "by reason of their lack of education, raise the price of flutegirls, hiring for a great sum the voice of a flute instead of their own breath, to be the medium of intercourse among them:..."

Yes, now let us see. Now these low-class banquets, in which people have nothing to contribute by themselves nor by

their voice and speeches. Why nothing by themselves? Because they are poor and yet they can pay very expensive flute-girls? This seems to be absurd. Yet that is not considered the symposium but the unions to which the banquets are compared. The low-class companions do not have to pay for the poems which they interpret or criticize; they may have to pay a lot for Protagoras' interpretation if he is in, but not for the poem. And their beings-together are cheap then in every respect; it doesn't cost them any money to get hold of these poems nor do they have to make any intellectual effort to speak them.

Now what about the high-class banquets of which he speaks now.

Student: "but where the company are real gentlemen and men of education, you will see no flute-girls, nor dancing-girls, nor harp-girls; and they have no nonsense or games, but are contented with one another's conversation, of which their own voices are the medium, and which they carry on by turns and in an orderly manner, even though they ~~are~~ very consume a lot of wine."

Now at these high-class banquets, no flute-girls and they drink a lot. But no disorderly conduct. In the low-class banquets they do not drink a lot, because they are poor, and they engage in disorderly conduct. Well, those of you who have read will have an indication of what a top banquet is. Well, we know, of course, symposiums in this country where there is no disorderly conduct but, on the other hand, people do not drink much. They have cocktail parties after them.

Student: "And a company like this of ours, and men such as we profess to be..."

"As most of us profess to be."

Student: "do not require the help of another's voice, or of the poets whom you cannot interrogate about the meaning of what they are saying; people who cite them declaring, some that the poet has one meaning, and others that he has another, and the point which is in dispute can never be decided. This sort of entertainment they decline,..."

Yes, literally, "they," these people cannot decide on this subject, they cannot settle it.

Student: "This sort of entertainment they decline, and prefer to talk with one another, and put one another to the proof in conversation. And these are the models

which I desire that you and I should imitate. Leaving the poets, and keeping to ourselves, let us try the mettle of one another and make proof of the truth in conversation."

Yes, now the poets here are compared to the flute-girls in the example. Socrates does not speak of the works of other wise men. And also, the discussion of the poets is useless in the case of people like the majority of those present. It can easily be read as a simple rejection of reading and studying books altogether. But this is not quite the same because if Plato or Socrates had discouraged the studying of books altogether, why did he himself write books? There is a problem in writings; he indicated even here, earlier in 329a to b, but especially in the Phaedrus. Now those who would like to have some further evidence about this question should read in Xenophon's Memorabilia, Book One, chapter six, paragraphs thirteen and fourteen especially, where Socrates is described as reading with his friends the books of the wise men of old.

Now Socrates says here they must imitate the banquets of gentlemen. Note clearly, no drunkenness, no disorderly conduct, no brawl--though we had something like a brawl before. But the comparison implies that there is a kind of intoxication, otherwise it would be somewhat far-fetched. Now what is that intoxication here? or what is comparable to intoxication in the two cases? what does intoxication do to men? I mean it does all kinds of things but there are also some other things.

Student: Loosens their tongue?

Exactly. Candor. And this is necessary. You remember the long discussions of candor in connection with Protagoras' ancestry and Socrates' ancestry. "The" discussion of drinking in Plato's work is, of course, in the first two books of the Laws which are called the speech about wine; where this loosening of the tongue is an especially important thing.

So Socrates has disposed of this whole pursuit of which Protagoras is so proud. And now what is his further proposal?

Student: "If you have a mind to ask, I am ready to answer; or if you would rather, do you answer, and give me the opportunity of resuming and completing our unfinished argument."

So, Socrates does not simply refuse to answer further questions of Protagoras; not even regarding poetry. But he makes it practically impossible for Protagoras to raise such questions by saying in effect, if you want to act like low-class people it is all right with me. Who would go on under these conditions? Yes.

Student: "I made these and some similar observations; but Protagoras..."

You see Socrates doesn't tell us what these other observations are. He is frank to Protagoras but not altogether frank or complete to the comrade to whom he tells the story. Yes.

Student: "but Protagoras would not distinctly say which he would do."

Naturally, because he is in a tough spot--whichever way he chooses he will be in a bad position. Yes.

Student: "Thereupon Alcibiades turned to Callias, and said:-- Do you think, Callias, that Protagoras is fair in refusing to say whether he will or will not answer? for I certainly think that he is unfair; he ought either to proceed with the argument, or distinctly to refuse to proceed, that we may know his intention; and then Socrates will be able to discourse with some one else, and the rest of the company will be free to talk with one another."

"Or somebody else will argue with somebody else." In other words, dialogues we are going to have, perhaps without Protagoras altogether.

Protagoras is completely frustrated as you see and he becomes a mere object; his fate will be decided by Alcibiades and the others. Now Alcibiades puts an ultimatum to him--put up or shut up. Alcibiades is responsible for the continuation of the dialogue after the end of the Simonides section and again here. Now what does Protagoras...he has to say something.

Student: "I think that Protagoras was really made ashamed by these words of Alcibiades, and when the prayers of Callias and some of the others were superadded, he was at last induced to argue, and said that I might ask and he would answer."

He is completely defeated because both Socrates' adherent, Alcibiades, and Protagoras' adherent, Callias, urge him to continue the conversation. And he lacks the strength to say that he will be the one who does the questioning; he is completely licked.

Now Hippias, you see here, says...now let me see. Yes, "and almost all others," if that doesn't come out in the translation. Well, I bet that Hippias did not urge on Protagoras for he would have been too glad to be a discussant. We come now at this point to the last section of the dialogue and this

is a proper place for summarizing what we know about the plan of the work as a whole. I read it to you as I have it in my statement:

- I. Socrates and the comrade
- II. Socrates and Hippocrates
- III. Socrates and Protagoras (The bulk of the work)
 - A. Prior to the talk with Protagoras (When Socrates describes the scene)
 - B. Socrates' private talk with Protagoras
 - C. Protagoras' reply to Socrates' public question and his long speech
 - D. The debate between Socrates and Protagoras
 - E. The litigation scene
 - F. The discussion of Simonides' poem
 - G. The continuation of the debate between Socrates and Protagoras

The Hippocrates section is the central section and we will get some further proof of this soon. Socrates starts now this last section. Let us see how he takes it up.

Student: "So I said: Do not imagine, Protagoras, that I have any other interest in asking questions of you but that of clearing up my own difficulties, as they arise. For I think that Homer was very right in saying that

"When two go together, one sees before the other,"

for all men who have a companion are readier in deed, word, or thought; but if a man

"Sees a thing when he is alone,"

he goes about straightway seeking until he finds some one to whom he may show his discoveries, and who may confirm him in them."

Yes, now Socrates' desire to converse is inspired by his desire to learn something; this is the highest purpose for which men need other men--in order to understand. The desire for wisdom, a selfish desire, leads to the social activity of conversation. Or, as the Latin proverb has it:
, by teaching we learn.

Now the verse here quoted is in the Tenth Book of the Iliad, 224 and following, Diomedes speaking. And Diomedes, knowing that he needs a companion, chooses Odysseus as his companion. Similarly Socrates chooses Protagoras as his companion. Socrates, who had been the Odysseus before, as we have seen,

ceases to be the Odysseus. So, Protagoras becomes now Odysseus and we must see what this means. Homer says, says Socrates, in fact--Homer's Diomedes says it. So, if we follow this precedent, can we ascribe to Plato what his character said?--say Protagoras or whoever else. Or, can we ascribe to Plato only the wise things which his characters say? Well, then, we must be wise before we can say what Plato says. That is a great difference. Well, we act on that principle and we would not ascribe a manifest stupidity to Plato; and even if it is said by Socrates, we would say, of course, that is ironical. But this is common-sensical enough yet it needs a clear principle and therefore one cannot leave it at this--we must think a bit more about it. Yes, now.

Student: "And I would rather hold discourse with you than with any one, because I think that no man can better investigate most things which a good man may be expected to investigate, and in particular virtue. For who is there, but you?--who not only claim to be a good man and a gentleman, for many are this, and yet have not the power of making others good--

Yes, "claim" is not exactly it--"who do not only yourself believe to be a gentleman."

Student: "whereas you are not only good yourself, but also able to make others good. Moreover, such confidence have you in yourself, that although other Sophists conceal their profession, you proclaim openly in the face of Hellas that you are a Sophist or teacher of virtue and education, and are the first who demanded pay in return."

Yes, now let us wait here for a second. So, since Socrates is concerned with learning something, he is especially concerned with conversing with a man of Protagoras' wisdom--that goes without saying. But what is the implication? Insofar as he is concerned with wisdom, he would never converse with the comrade, to whom he tells the story, nor with Hippocrates, or for that matter with Crito or Glaucon or the others. Those conversations are not due to his desire for wisdom but to his desire to be helpful to others. And this is the simple proof that since the desire to be helpful to others is the highest form of justice, that wisdom and justice are two different things. You see we must not only listen to what Socrates says about the various virtues, we must see what we can observe here, what is presented to us. Now by ridiculing Protagoras here rather obviously, Socrates makes clear that his conversation with Protagoras, too, will not make Socrates

wiser. Again, Socrates is concerned...well, why does he converse with Protagoras? if not in order to become wiser?

Student: For the sake of Hippocrates.

Hippocrates. Again, a just action. Justice, not wisdom. This shows a difference between justice and wisdom.

Socrates is concerned with both wisdom and justice. These two virtues may be inseparable but they are surely not identical. Now he said here in this long statement which we have just read--he speaks of the peculiarity, or the originality of Protagoras. In what does it consist? According to Protagoras' original claim it consisted in what?

Student: In being the first to proclaim himself.

In other words, in his candor. Now Socrates, as we see here, does not leave to Protagoras even this claim to eminence. The originality, what he did first, was to teach virtue for money. Now Protagoras' motive for teaching or for conversing is neither concern for wisdom, because he regards himself wise in advance, nor justice, but, money. Perhaps he is concerned with justice indirectly, namely with the justice of others, so that they will pay him the honorarium. After all he has no way of forcing them to pay. I remind you of the question we discussed earlier on in regard to 327b2. But you must look it up at home, we cannot go into that.

So this is now clear and now he turns to the original question. Yes.

Student: [first part of question inaudible] This last paragraph is a good illustration of the principle you apply in reading Plato--part of the paragraph being used as simple truth explaining why Socrates converses, explaining his character. He converses for wisdom and justice. But then you took part of it also as part of Socrates' irony...

But where does it say that Protagoras converses with Socrates in order to become wise?

Student: No I meant that Socrates says he is conversing with Protagoras to become wise. But you disregarded that as ironical.

Yes, because, well I did not do this merely because I had this impression but because the whole previous happenings show that Socrates cannot learn much from his methods or anything to speak of from Protagoras.

Student: What shows you that his reasons for the discussion

are really, truly spoken.

Because it makes sense. All of us, if we have an insight, however sound it may seem to us to be, if no one else listens to it ever, then we begin to wonder if we are crazy. So there is a necessity for that.

Student: There seems to be great difficulties in your writings and wasn't it you who pointed out that some of the things Plato says only a very few could understand?

Yes, but a few are still some.

Student: These very few could be spread out across the ages.

That is a difficulty, surely. But still there is a difficulty here and there is no mechanical way out. But there is no question that we need others to test our own view. Because if there are only my views, then I may have hallucinations of sorts and they may be sheer nonsense. At least to some extent this test is absolutely necessary. If one can show that something follows from certain premises necessarily and others claiming the premises deny the conclusion. Then the question is whether they are not prevented by a hallucination of theirs, by a prejudice, from concluding this. But this presupposes still this argument with the others.

Student: You wrote about that in your work and said that the only love between men [inaudible] because you love them you are apt to overlook some of their inconsistencies and let love stand in the way of the truth. [inaudible]

That is a danger and there is no mechanical criteria. This risk we have to take.

Student: Isn't it possible that we must always be skeptics as to our abilities...

No, but, always willing to reconsider. I mean skepticism comes from the word skepsis and this means considering, looking at. Socrates says, "nothing like having another look at it." This kind of skepticism is the opposite of that kind of lazy skepticism which says we don't know, we can't know, let's do something else. But the industrious skepticism says let us examine it again. Even if we are quite sure of that... I mean there is something this has in common with the posture ascribed to modern science. But the way this posture is described, especially by the logical positivists, common sense is absent whereas common sense is present in this old skepsis. A mere historical fact: Plato founded the Academy and after some generations

it became the new academy, a skeptic school and later on it became a dogmatic school. Well, Plato's Academy proper was neither skeptical, in that sense, nor dogmatic; it was open-minded. Yes.

Student: In this relationship between wisdom and justice: couldn't something follow from the fact, well, isn't it just for Protagoras to collect a fee. Isn't that a manifestation of justice because he has wisdom and therefore in his intercourse with others he can't learn a thing from them.

Yes, but could he not do it from humanity; from human kindness communicate his wisdom to others?

Student: Well this is a problem...

Yes, if he is very poor and would starve we surely would not expect him to do that. But one could say that if these young men who are wealthy would surely not permit him to starve if they derived such benefit from him. Well as he says he did make it a condition. You remember he asks them to pay whatever they think is fair or they only have to go to the temple and swear. That is the reason he must foster piety among them lest they might commit perjury and he would then get no money.

Student: Would you think that a wise man, in teaching another person how to grow up through his wisdom, would learn even as teacher?

That is true. I mean how would one have to say it from Socrates' point of view? He would learn something about the soul, the major subject.

Student: And he would also learn, wouldn't you say, about how this particular soul...

Yes, yes, surely. But the question is...well, that is quite true to the extent...

Student: Then could we perhaps agree that perhaps in some sense being just to another would also be partaking in wisdom with another?

In other words that would mean we don't need justice as a special virtue?

Student: No, that there is the unity of virtue--that being just is also being wise.

Yes, sure, but still if the motivation is concerned with wisdom, we could say wisdom alone supplies the motivation and you do not need justice as a special virtue. But, on the other hand, if you look at this scene with Hippocrates what did Socrates learn about Hippocrates that he didn't know before? which he could not have figured out on the basis of what he knew of him before? Well, I assure you that there might be some peculiar possibility of which a man had no previous experience, then he will learn it but there is a certain limited number of possibilities or types.

Student: Wouldn't you say there's a difference between Socrates or anyone else having an idea about someone and an idea of what he might or probably do and the reality, the full, rich and concrete reality when that does happen which is much more than any idea could be?

Yes, well, that is a long...well, that is surely true but you must not assume, without previous proof, to Socrates' view which many people have today of the infinite wealth of
, I mean connected with a certain notion of freedom.

Student: Well the reason I am bringing it up is that in my view I think that Socrates is presenting in the Protagoras the fact that virtue is one and that any laws, for example if we define piety as doing such and such and so and so and give another definition to justice and another definition to courage; that there's a difference between following a law and being present to the one virtue, which Plato might call the good and in the Hebraic-Christian tradition might be called God--in which God is the sum of all virtue.

Yes, can you say that...I mean there are some theologians around here...can you say that god has all the virtues? strictly speaking, can you say that god is courageous, god is temperate? Sounds like blasphemy! But even without revealed theology read the end of Aristotle's Ethics where he says something about these matters. But you can say perfect goodness; and the virtues are not themselves perfect goodness, but presuppose some fundamental defect. So temperance is not a virtue unless we are tempted to be intemperate and now god is not tempted, by definition, therefore there is some question.

But surely Plato does not believe that laws are the solution to the problem. He has written a very famous criticism of laws as such--the Statesman--but here there is no link-up with the question of laws, or is there? This is only the question of the distinction of the virtues.

Well then he would call it . the little demon.

Student: Something that calls him to follow?

Yes, but still it wouldn't be god. I mean god is theos and not , something demonic. Well, let us see; perhaps later on we find a passage which might be of help to you. Now where did we leave?

Student: 349a4.

Yes. Let us go on.

Student: "How then can I do otherwise than invite you to the investigation of these subjects, and ask questions and consult with you? I must, indeed. And I should like once more to have my memory refreshed by you about the questions which I was asking you at first, and also to have your help in considering them. If I am not mistaken the question was this: Are wisdom and self-control and courage and justice and piety five names which denote the same thing? or is there corresponding to each of these names a separate underlying reality...

If you want to use a traditional term then you should say substance.

Student: "substance, a thing with its own peculiar power, no one of them being like any other of them?"

Now let us first stop here. Now Socrates repeats here the original question. Now there is a general rule regarding such repetitions just as there is a general rule regarding the central thing--by the way, the central thing here is again courage. The general rule is that there is never identical repetition and that the changes, however small, are as important as the thing repeated.

When you look here at the original enumeration in 313b4 to 6 you'll see that place occupied here by temperance or moderation is there by justice and visa versa. The simple rule: justice and moderation are interchangeable--one can take the place of the other. An impressive case of interchangeability is that in the Banquet where Aristophanes is prevented from speaking because he has got a hiccup and the physician Eryximachus speaks first as Aristophanes is trying to recover from his unpleasantness. Eryximachus and Aristophanes are interchanged; they are interchangeable--of course, we do not yet know from what point of view.

Now there is another change in the repetition, as you could also see by comparing the earlier passage 313a3 to 6. Each of these virtues has a peculiar , which then became via the latin the word substance. But it would be,

literally translated, being or beingness. We can perhaps find out later on what this change, which is very profound though not immediately intelligible, means.

Let us read on.

Student: "And you replied that the five names did not denote a single thing, but that each of them denoted a separate thing, and that all of these things were parts of virtue, not in the same way that the parts of gold are like each other and like the whole of which they are parts, but as the parts of the face are unlike the whole of which they are parts and one another,....

Now you remember the difficulty which we pointed out but which was not pointed out by Socrates: if the parts of virtue are like the parts of the face, the parts of virtue would not be virtues as literally the eyes and the ears are faces. Now Socrates had omitted in the first statement, 329d to e, the question of whether the virtues might not be parts in the sense in which the species, the ideas, are parts of the genus--for example, circle and rectangle are species of the genus geometrical figures or man and dogs are species, parts, of the genus mammals. This possibility was not mentioned at all. Now perhaps he alludes to this possibility in the repetition here by speaking of being or beingness, which is used by Plato frequently, synonymously with idea. Good.

Now let us go on.

Student: "and have...

To repeat: on the whole, Socrates simply repeats the state of the question as it was stated originally prior to the litigation scene and prior to the Simonides scene. Yes.

Student: "and have each of them a distinct power. I should like to know whether this is still your opinion; or if not, I will ask you to define your meaning, and I shall not take you to task if you now make a different statement. For I dare say that you may have said what you did only in order to make trial of me."

Now is he not nice? He builds a golden bridge for Protagoras and he leaves him again a choice--will you repeat your statement with which you didn't fare too well or will you make the necessary adjustment? Socrates imputes to Protagoras what he does, namely, to make assertions only for the sake of testing others--that is a Socratic irony. He treats Protagoras as that kind of Odysseus that he himself is.

This testing was spoken of before in 340d when Socrates spoke of joking. Prodicus made a certain statement and then Socrates says that Prodicus didn't mean it, he only joked. But this joking and testing are the same thing whether the other understands or does not understand that this statement is not meant literally and serious. Now what does Protagoras do when confronted with this?

Student: "I answer, Socrates, he said, that all these qualities are parts of virtue, and that four out of the five are to some extent similar, and that the fifth of them, which is courage, is very different from the other four, as I prove in this way: You may observe that many men are utterly unrighteous, impious, self-indulgent, ignorant, who are nevertheless remarkable for their courage."

Now Protagoras tacitly retracts the comparison of the four virtues with the parts of the face; he almost admits that Socrates' abortive attempt to prove the identity of these four virtues has been successful. So he has learned something. The virtue that shows the truth of Protagoras' original assertion is courage or manliness. Why does he say that?

Well, we can say that things have gone wrong or badly for him with the four other virtues and this is a sheer act of prudence to speak of the one which had not previously been discussed. This is all right as far as it goes but it does not answer a primary question, namely, why did not Socrates bring up courage or manliness in the preceding discussions.

Now he had been leading up to the dualism of justice-piety on the one hand moderation-wisdom on the other. I repeat this time and again because it is crucial, I think. Now could one not say that courage or manliness is required by both, by justice-piety on the one hand and by moderation-prudence on the other--so that it would be in a class by itself. The peculiarity of courage, the unique position, is also indicated toward the end of the Laws 963 to 964b. But, of course, this does not prove that this is an absolute assertion of Plato because the Laws are a very special book, they are anti-Spartan and courage is the virtue of the Spartans, or was thought to be; therefore, the necessity for debunking courage, for my denying any connection between it and wisdom. So, this will not help. Now why does this question of courage come up in this way? because his other explanations are not good enough.

Well, in order to understand this dialogue and the last section in particular we must never forget the fact that the dialogue takes place for the sake of Hippocrates. Now let us reconsider what happened from the angle of Hippocrates and imagine what has been going on in his soul.

Now he is eager to become a pupil of Protagoras because he has political ambition. Protagoras is a teacher of the political art or political virtue. Socrates doubts whether this is teachable; he asserts that. And his simple proof is the Athenian democracy. Protagoras understood the warning and replies that the Athenian democracy regards virtue as teachable by everyone; and that everyone has been taught virtue effectively with a few exceptions. But this virtue which he calls political virtue is not any excellence or eminence; it consists of justice, piety, moderation in a very simple and low sense. Courage and wisdom are not a part of it. The instruction in virtue which is peculiar to Protagoras, as distinguished from every Athenian, becomes almost invisible. I hope you remember that. Now, then, Socrates raises the question--after Protagoras has finished his long speech--of the relation of virtue and its parts. He tries to prove that piety and justice is identical with and inseparable from wisdom. Now what does this mean? Either every Athenian is wise, and Socrates as a matter of fact says so in a passage which we did not appreciate in 396b3 to 4. Or most Athenians by being not wise are not even pious and just--that is an alternative. But Protagoras cannot dare to question the wisdom of the Athenians. So we must leave it at the wisdom of the Athenians and that means that no Athenian needs Protagoras' art. They are well supplied. Now in the debate Protagoras is defeated by Socrates--this much Hippocrates must have seen, this debunkment. And still more so in the litigation scene. Protagoras then turns to his special forte, the interpretation and criticism of poetry. But precisely on that ground he is again defeated by Socrates; he is compelled to return to Socrates' subject. Now you see, Hippocrates is no longer likely to be eager to pay money to Protagoras for his instruction. Now at this point Protagoras insists on the radical difference between courage, manliness, and the other virtues.

Courage surely is not wisdom or knowledge; that seems to be obvious to him and I suppose to us too. But, courage is surely an indispensable ingredient of political virtue in the ordinary, common sensical sense of the term. Now if this is so, it follows indeed, if courage is not wisdom and it is essential for political excellence then political virtue is not teachable; because only knowledge of some sort could be taught--except to those who are already courageous. Protagoras can't make them courageous but if they are courageous he can build on their courage wisdom. Hippocrates doesn't have to come to Protagoras in order to learn courage but wisdom. Now what about this condition. Does Hippocrates fulfill the condition of being courageous before he comes to Protagoras?

Student: He went after that slave.

No, explicitly, Socrates in 310d3 says explicitly that he was impressed by his courage. So, this is a special situation. Therefore, the only virtue which Hippocrates already possesses is courage. And there is no question of his possessing wisdom or moderation or justice. And he is, so to speak, a natural candidate for instruction by Protagoras. Now, of course, the great question arises: if courage should prove to be wisdom, then two consequences follow, either that Hippocrates does not need Protagoras or else that Hippocrates is not even courageous, whatever that may be according to what Socrates provisionally called courage. This will be decided in the sequel.

Student: [question inaudible]

Prior to real proof we have to believe Socrates. We don't know Hippocrates but Socrates knew him and Socrates said he had political ambitions and Socrates said he is courageous. Whether these things, especially that assertion regarding courage, will not break down after a more profound study of what courage is, is another matter but in the superficial sense he is courageous.

Student: But if he is courageous, he is in the sense that he is like the other people of this group privileged to come to Protagoras for further enlightenment.

Yes, but, of course, here the question is disregarded and there are various levels. Whether you do not need some intelligence in addition to courage in order to learn something, this question is wholly abstracted from this dialogue. There is an allusion to it when Socrates speaks about his nature, when he speaks to Protagoras about Hippocrates' nature he had discussed it at that time, he only said what people think about his nature not what his nature truly is.

Student: It seems that you just said that if courage is wisdom then either Hippocrates doesn't need Protagoras' teaching or else...

Yes, he is not courageous.

Student: Well, suppose he had this rough kind of courage that people come to Protagoras with to be further enlightened?

Yes, but this, I mean, if this proves to not be courage then it is no good.

Student: You mean what Protagoras is teaching.

No, no, his quality--if his quality only looks like courage but isn't courage, it is no good.

Student: Protagoras' art is no longer the political art, it has something to do with this enlightenment and might well be reduced to rhetoric.

Yes, well, rhetoric is eminently political.

Student: But it is not the political art.

Well, the first part of your statement is very good and very important. In the whole process of the Protagoras, Socrates not only debunks Protagoras and shows that he is not as clever and admirable as people think, but, and which is equally important, he debunks this notion of the political art. The art which will come out in the sequel--because Socrates will make a counterproposal in the sequel to Protagoras of what the sophists should do--this art is no longer the political art. So, there is a twofold debunking and the beginning of that is Protagoras' statement regarding courage here--but it takes some time. So let us continue.

Student: "Stop, I said; I should like to investigate that. When you speak of courageous men, do you mean the confident, or something else?
Yes, he said; I mean the aggressive, ready to go at that which other people are afraid to approach. In the next place, you would affirm virtue to be a good thing, of which good thing you assert yourself to be a teacher."

Oh no, "noble." He speaks obviously of noble in this connection here. I mean what we call the moral was called by the Greeks the noble and just. The good in itself is not [tape broken at this point] The just and the noble: the just is what is our duty, as we think, and the noble is beyond the call of duty, I mean what is particularly praiseworthy. The noble in Latin is , which has all kinds of meanings including honest.

He says, "most noble unless I am mad." Now we had a reference to madness in 323a to b--a certain true statement would never be made by people who are not mad. So this does not mean that it would be mad to make the statement but it is not necessarily untrue according to Protagoras' own interpretation of what madness is. But go on.

Student: "And is it partly noble and partly base, I said, or wholly noble?
Wholly noble, and in the highest degree.
Tell me, then, who are they who have confidence when diving into a well?

I should say, divers.

And the reason of this is that they have knowledge?

Yes, that is the reason.

And who have confidence when fighting on horseback--the skilled horsemen or the unskilled?

The skilled.

And who when fighting with light shields--the peltasts or the nonpeltasts?

The peltasts. And that is true of all other cases, he said, if that is your point: those who have knowledge are more confident than those who have no knowledge, and they are more confident after they have learned than before.

And have you not seen persons utterly ignorant, I said, of these things, and yet confident about them?

Yes, he said, I have seen such persons far too confident.

And are not these confident persons also courageous?

In that case, he replied, courage would be a base thing, for the men of whom we are speaking are surely madmen.

Then what do you mean when you speak of the courageous?

Do you not mean that they are confident?

Yes, he said; to that statement I adhere.

And those, I said, who are thus confident without knowledge are really not courageous, but mad; and in their former case, on the other hand, those who are the wisest are also the most confident, and being the most confident are also the most courageous, and according to this argument also wisdom would be courage."

Now what is the nub of the argument? There are two kinds of confidence, a noble and a base. The noble we call courage and the base we call madness. Noble confidence is courage. But what is the difference between noble confidence and ignoble confidence? Answer: that it is based on knowledge. Hence, courage, noble confidence, is knowledge or wisdom. That is Socratic irony.

Now let us not consider now what Protagoras says later because Protagoras will give a critical analysis of this argument. But what will be our reaction to it?

Student: I think it depends on what the knowledge is of. You might say that to know that you can get away with it is not what we call courage. But to know that you must do a thing even if there is a very little chance of your coming through is an ingredient in true military courage.

Yes, well, let us try to be a bit more precise. Now those

who face something of which they know that it is not dangerous, are they courageous? If someone is not afraid of a harmless fly? Surely not. By courage we understand something like standing up to dangerous things, for example, to the tyrant in all his might. Now is it of the essence of the wise man to do this? to stand up to the tyrant and all his might? According to Simonides in 346b, no, the wise man may adjust himself. Only the wise men who oppose the tyrants in justice need courage. So the relation of wisdom and courage is ambiguous and this surely implies that wisdom is not identical with courage. The argument, in other words, has somehow a defect. Aristotle develops this at great length in the third book of the Ethics when he speaks of courage and shows that this is professional courage, is not true courage because simply you trust your competence, you do not face a danger as such. Yes?

Student: Would you say that Socrates in every one of his actions which is concerned with wisdom is also displaying courage? Because in always going deeper into anything and getting involved with people for wisdom there is always the unknown, he doesn't know what is going to happen, because he is getting involved with them.

Yes, well, I suppose so. But the question is can any man be simply courageous? At the end of the Phaedo, the praise of Socrates...does anyone have it here? because I don't remember it by heart. Well, Socrates was said to be the best, the wisest and so on of his contemporaries, not simply. Because if all virtue is wisdom and men cannot be wise but only seekers for wisdom, then, of course, no men can be simply virtuous. And therefore I hesitate to answer your question. Now in the ordinary sense he surely was a very courageous man.

Student: Well, since everyman has to be a seeker for wisdom...

Student: For both men...

I see, he was the wisest, and justest, and best. Well, courage is something mentioned in it.

In the lists of Socrates' virtues, the two lists, which Xenophon makes, courage is not mentioned. That is a long question because courage is an ambiguous virtue.

Student: If every man has to be a seeker for wisdom and can never be wise and never be good, doesn't this always involve going beyond yourself and looking for more and isn't this what courage is.

Well, all right, then you understand courage in an unusual way. But you are surely making one mistake. Plato

or Socrates doesn't say that every man must seek for wisdom. Some can't and if they would try, it would be very sorry, a very sorry spectacle.

Student: I think in the Phaedo Socrates says that his life or all life is a preparation for dying.

Yes. But who are the ones who prepare themselves for death according to Socrates?

Student: Only the wise. Strauss: Philosophers. and as you can see we are back where we started.

~~Philosophers. And as you see we are back where we started.~~
Now the new gentleman in the class, yes?

Student: Is the implication here that fear is predicated upon ignorance and as you get knowledge fear tends to dissipate?

Yes.

Student: And with the lack of fear, which comes through knowledge, also comes confidence. And with confidence you have courage. There is a definite relationship here.

But this question is, is this what we mean by courage? the kind of confidence coming from knowledge? that is from this kind of professional knowledge. Then you have to put it on a broader basis and say, courage comes from the awareness that death is no evil, from the insight that death is no evil. Well, and that is a long story. Now that is not the kind of knowledge which the horseman or the divers as such have. They may have it but they do not have it as such.

But I suggest that we turn to Protagoras' criticism of Socrates' argument which comes in the sequel. It would be good if we could finish that.

Student: "Nay, Socrates, he replied, you are mistaken in your remembrance of what was said and answered to you. When you asked me, I certainly did say that the courageous are the confident; but I was never asked whether the confident are the courageous; if you had asked me, I should have answered "Not all of them": and what I did answer, namely that the courageous are confident, you have not proved to be false..."

Yes, let us first see. Here you see first now he is quite sure of himself; he is no longer nervous. And this may be due to Socrates' treatment; in other words, Socrates said to him, you may have made your earlier statements not because

you believe them but in order to test me. Now his diagnosis of the defect of Socrates' reasoning. Socrates had inferred from the courageous are confident that the confident are courageous. Did Socrates do that? I don't believe so. Certain phrases could have led Protagoras into thinking that but Socrates made it perfectly clear, confidence is the genus of which courage and madness are species. But he gives now another diagnosis in the sequel. Yes.

Student: "Next you proceeded to show that those who have knowledge are more confident than they were before they had knowledge, and more confident than others who have no knowledge, and were then led on to think that courage is the same as wisdom. But in this way of arguing you might come to imagine that strength is wisdom. You might begin by asking whether the strong are able, and I should say "Yes"; and then whether those who know how to...

Let us rather say powerful; that the strong are powerful.

Student: "the strong are powerful, and I should say "yes"; and then whether those who know how to wrestle are not more able to wrestle than those who do not know how to wrestle, and more powerful after than before they had learned, and I should assent. And when I had admitted this you might use my admissions in such a way as to prove that upon my view wisdom is strength; whereas in that case I should not have admitted, any more than in the other, that the powerful are strong, although I have admitted that the strong are powerful. For there is a difference between power and strength;

Yes, now let us stop here for a moment. Now this analysis runs like this. Socrates had inferred from the fact that the knowers are more courageous than the nonknowers that courage is knowledge. Socrates had done this. But why is the inference wrong? According to Protagoras, Socrates inference is like this: the strong are powerful, the knowers are powerful; hence strength is identical with knowledge. But by admitting this, the strong are powerful, one does not admit that all powerful are strong. Or to take a simple example of the fallacy of Socrates which Protagoras objected to, all geese are animals, all seagulls are animals, ergo all geese are seagulls. But Socrates, whatever he did, did not commit this kind of blunder. So, Protagoras has not really seen what the problem here is. Socrates did not make this simple blunder, that is clear, whatever was wrong. Now let us see how Protagoras goes on from here.

Student: "the former, that is power, is given by knowledge as well as by madness or rage,

Power and strength are not the same; power comes both from knowledge and from madness as well as spiritedness.

Student: "but strength comes from nature and a healthy state of the body."

No, "good food," good feeding. Yes, so power comes from knowledge and from madness as well as spiritedness. Strength comes from nature and good feeding of the bodies. In other words, so far from being identical, power and strength have absolutely nothing in common. He goes to the other extreme in order to prevent Socrates' false extreme, I mean the simple identification. And now the crucial part...

Student: "And in like manner I say of confidence and courage, that they are not the same; and I argue that the courageous are confident, but not all the confident courageous. For confidence may be given to men by art,

Art in the same sense as science, here, or, knowledge.

Student: "and also, like power, by madness and rage; but courage comes to them from nature and good nurturing of the soul."

Yes, now the statement is clear. Now if we take it very literally it means that courage is not a kind of confidence just as strength is not a kind of power. In other words, Protagoras would run from the frying pan into the fire in order to prevent the identification of wisdom and courage or of confidence and courage. He denies that they have anything in common.

But, more important is the following: courage comes from nature and good feeding of the soul. But what is the food for the soul?

Student: Teaching.

Teaching, 313c, where Socrates explains this to Hippocrates. Hence, courage comes from knowledge of properly gifted people, from the education of the properly gifted people. But what about wisdom? Does wisdom not come from exactly the same thing? Hence, Protagoras proves, unwittingly, what he hates to prove, namely, that courage is wisdom. But, perhaps Protagoras makes a distinction between good feeding of the souls and learning or teaching for all we know. Then, of course, courage would not be the same as wisdom. Wisdom would have nothing to

do with good feeding of the souls, i.e. with the education which he, Protagoras, conveys. That could be. But this is not wisdom at all what he teaches these young ambitious Athenians. But does he even teach courage? We have observed his silence on courage in his long speech where he mentioned only justice, piety, and moderation. These three virtues which he called at that time political virtue do not come from nature because everyone has it. But they come in a manner from good feeding of the soul. Wisdom comes from nature but not from good feeding of the soul. And then, if this is so, courage would occupy a position in between political virtue, in Protagoras' sense, and wisdom. Yet this, of course, untenable because political virtue must include, whether Protagoras has admitted it or not, courage because the political art necessarily includes the art of war, as Protagoras states in his long speech, 326.

One thing is clear, the final statement here at the end of this speech and the statement in 349d6 to 8, they contradict each other. Protagoras seems to be quite confused regarding this virtue of manliness or courage. And we have to turn to that next time. Let us read only the very beginning of the next statement.

Student: "I said: You would admit, Protagoras, that some men live well and other ill?"

Yes, now let us stop here. Now Protagoras, in his view, has defeated Socrates' attempt to prove that wisdom is identical with courage. And he has made quite a long speech, as you have seen. But Socrates acts very differently than he did on that former occasion when Protagoras made his long speech in 334-5. Why does he act differently now? In the former occasion, in 334c6 to 7, after he had made the long speech, you remember, something different is good for the roots of the tree and for the leaves and all this kind of thing. When he had said this, those present shouted aloud how well he spoke; and then Socrates begins with the litigation. Now here we see no shouting, no praise of Protagoras. How come? Why do the others not acclaim Protagoras any more? Well, a simple explanation would be that they have learned a lesson. Last time they acclaimed, Socrates threatened to finish the whole thing. In other words, the others and Protagoras are now in awe of Socrates. Not only Protagoras but the audience, too, is chastened.

Yes. Now we leave it at this point and we will pick it up at this point next time. I am sorry I cannot stay here for questions.

Plato's Protagoras. A course by Professor Leo Strauss in the Department of Political Science, at the University of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 14 May 12, 1965

It seems to me that all the difficulties of this dialogue are concentrated in the last section, which we are discussing now. I will state to you the difficulties in the form of questions. Perhaps we can solve them; I am by no means certain that I can. Now there are three things: the emphasis on courage or manliness--is wisdom identical with courage or not?--why that emphasis on manliness? Second, Socrates tries to prove the identity of manliness and wisdom on the basis of the premise that the good is identical with the pleasant--why that? And third, this premise is not accepted by Protagoras nor is it accepted by the many; and yet Socrates establishes this in a dialogue within the dialogue between Socrates and the many--why does he bring in the many? These are the three glaring questions and we can only hope that we get an answer to them; but, I don't promise it.

Now I will only give a brief repetition, slightly enlarging on what I said last time. Now courage is the only virtue according to Protagoras which is surely not wisdom or knowledge. And that means that the only virtue which Protagoras or anybody else cannot teach; because you can only teach knowledge. At the same time, it is the only virtue ascribed by Socrates to Hippocrates. Now if Protagoras teaches something different from what every Athenian teaches, the political art which he teaches cannot be what he calls political virtue, i.e. justice, piety, and moderation to the exclusion of wisdom and courage. The political art requires, in a broader sense, in the sense in which he meant it originally and not after having been warned by Socrates; the political art in which Hippocrates is interested requires on the part of the pupil who wishes to go into politics a particular drive or energy, as we would say today, which only a few men possess. And that is loosely meant by courage.

This whole notion of the political art which Protagoras did not develop according to Socrates' warning--don't forget you are in Athens--stands and falls by the fact that wisdom differs from courage. If, however, wisdom and courage were identical, it would follow either that Hippocrates, being courageous is already wise and therefore doesn't need Protagoras or else that Hippias is not courageous, and the kind of drive which he possesses is not courage--I mean Hippocrates. And hence he would not have any special natural fitness for becoming the pupil of Protagoras but only his wealth, which is, of course, an important consideration for Protagoras.

Now Socrates has tried to prove that courage and wisdom are the same and he has clearly failed, although not for the reason given by Protagoras. Furthermore, in stating his view of courage, Protagoras in fact brings courage very close to wisdom. I do not know whether that became quite clear last time, in 351b beginning when he says courage comes from nature

and good breeding of the souls. And if you turn to the first statement by Protagoras on this subject, in 349d6 to 8, you will find many men, most unjust, and impious, and licentious, and unteachable, and yet outstandingly courageous. In other words, courage contains nothing of an intellectual element and here at least good feeding of the soul could remind us of the intellect. Now why the dialogue turns around Hippocrates? We must never forget that one of the few glimmers of light we have in our misery. Hippocrates is, however, not the only motif of this dialogue. Equally important and not unconnected with the Hippocrates motif is Protagoras' peculiarity, what distinguishes him from all other men--and that is his candor. That is, of course, very important for young Hippocrates because he will know exactly where he stands; if that claim of Protagoras is justified. Now the question of candor is not explicitly discussed; but only implicitly. And it comes to the fore in the Simonides section, where we have seen a confrontation of the two ancestries--Socrates' and Protagoras'--and both were not characterized by candor whereas Protagoras is the candid man. Now Socrates takes the side of the concealers, the laconizers, or the makers of long speeches like Simonides. There are two kinds of concealment: one stemming from justice and one stemming from fear. Simonides, highly praised by Socrates, practiced the latter; which means that Simonides was wise but not courageous. So, the whole issue of concealment implies the relation of wisdom and courage. Protagoras says there is no need for concealment, i. e. there is a harmony between wisdom and the city and therefore no need of courage for the wise man--the question of courage doesn't arise. But if there should be a disharmony between wisdom and the city, the wise man must either stand up and be courageous or adjust himself--the question of courage necessarily arises for the man who believes in concealment.

I mention in this connection a point which I didn't bring out on the earlier occasion, on the proper occasion. Now if there is a harmony between philosophy or wisdom and the city, i.e. the two good things, then prepolitical life is the bad thing. Or, to use a simple term, civilization is simply good. There is no problem of civilization. But if there is a disharmony between wisdom and the city, there is a problem of civilization. Prepolitical life is not "the" bad thing, there are vices of civilization which are as bad as the defects of prephilosophic life. Now Protagoras, who says there is no need for concealment that is that there is a harmony between philosophy and the city, also says there is no problem of civilization. Prepolitical life is absolutely terrible and compared with it everything now is just wonderful--you remember that statement in 327d. The Platonic view, one can say, is stated in the Laws, 678a: civilization is the simultaneous development of virtues and vices. In passing I remark that there is a certain similarity between Protagoras and modern enlightenment as

represented by Hobbes especially, on the one hand, and Socrates and Rousseau's critique of the enlightenment, on the other hand. This is, I believe, generally known although not universally known. But we must not forget that there are also very important differences. Well, if you make it a proportion [goes to the board]

Protagoras is to Socrates
as Hobbes is to Rousseau.

But that is a proportion and that is not identical; in other words, there is something that Protagoras and Socrates share by the mere fact that they are not modern and which Hobbes and Rousseau share by the mere fact that they are modern. This question is a bit more subtle and therefore more difficult to answer, but, that is not a reason for disavowing it.

I think we should now continue from where we left off; that was in 350 or 351b3. So, the situation is this: Socrates has tried to prove, without success, that wisdom is identical with courage. He has failed. He turns now to an apparently entirely different subject. We will read this.

Student: "I said: You would admit, Protagoras, that some men live well and others ill?"

He assented.

And do you think that a man lives well who lives in pain and grief?

He does not."

No, that is always indirect speech: he denied it.

Student: "But if he lives pleasantly to the end of his life, will he not in that case have lived well?"

No, "if he would end his life pleasantly," "if living pleasantly, he would end his life."

Student: "He assented."

No, no, now he says, "I agree." Because Socrates forces him now to answer in his own name and not merely to say what the others say.

Student: "Then to live pleasantly is good, and to live unpleasantly is base?"

Now let us stop here for one moment. Socrates proposes that the good is identical with the pleasant. This is very strange because in the sister dialogue, in the Gorgias, Socrates asserts exactly the opposite; that the good is radically different from the pleasant. This he does especially in the Callicles section where this is "the" theme. Now why does he here proceed in the opposite manner? Well, it is not clear, we must wait and see.

Or, do you have an answer?

Student: Well, your suggestion from last time: the Simonides section made a distinction between some virtues being pleasant and others being simply good; some through self-compulsion and others through compulsion--suggesting that if this distinction breaks down then the Simonides section provides the link of the unity of the virtues. And Socrates is now going to break down the distinction.

Yes, well, whether that is sufficient I doubt very much. But we get an inkling of it here: to live well means to live pleasantly and if living pleasantly, he would end his life. In other words, ending the life is popularly called dying. What about dying blessedly? Furthermore, death casts its shadow on our whole life; can one live pleasantly if one fears death? and can one help fearing death unless one knows that death is not an evil or at least not the greatest evil.? But this knowledge is the core of the genuine courage. This shows also why the wise men, that is to say the men who are best at living well or pleasantly, must be courageous; because otherwise the greatest pain, the greatest fear, would spoil all pleasures. But if the wise are courageous, why do they give in to tyrants as Simonides did and thus show lack of courage? Now surely the case of Socrates is not identical to that of Simonides but Socrates answers the question in the Apology, 31b: 'Why did you not go into politics?' a fictitious question addressed to him. 'Well, I would have been killed.' Now does this mean that Socrates was afraid of death or did he think he was still useful? That is a question which we must not .

So, let us go on here. Now Protagoras is already speaking for himself. And Socrates had said that to live pleasantly is good and to live unpleasantly is bad. What does Protagoras say?

Student: "Yes, he said, if he lives so as to find pleasure in what is good and noble."

No, "in the noble things." "If he lives deriving pleasure from the noble things only." So, in other words, Protagoras opposes the simple equation of the good with the pleasant--only certain kinds, only the noble pleasant things are good. So that is important. Protagoras does not accept the premise of the whole argument that the good is unqualifiedly identical to the pleasant. Yes.

Student: "Do you, Protagoras, like the rest of the world,...

"Like the many."

Student: "call some pleasant things evil and some painful things good?--for I say that things are good in as far as they are pleasant, if they have no consequences of another

sort, and insofar as they are painful they are bad.

I do not know, Socrates, he said, whether I can venture to assert...

No, let us first see what Socrates said. No, I am sorry, please read on.

Student: "I do not know, Socrates, he said, whether I can venture to assert in that unqualified manner in which you ask that all pleasant things are good and the painful evil. Having regard not only to my present answer, but also to the whole of my life, I shall be safer, if I am not mistaken, in saying that there are some pleasant things which are not good, and that there are some painful things which are not evil, and some which are, and there some which are neither good nor evil."

Yes. Now you see that Socrates appealed, as it were, to the snobbism of Protagoras--"you don't agree with the view of the many, do you?"--but this doesn't make any impression on Protagoras. Protagoras has been chastened as you see; he has learned to be well-advised and not only think of the present situation and what might get him out of a fix because it might bring him into a fix on another occasion. But, he has learned this in his old age. His answer must not only be good for the moment but in harmony with his whole life; meaning with the justification of his whole life in all circumstances. Or, one can state this as follows, one must not only think of impressing one's competitors and thus possibly repel potential students or visa versa. He has to take these two things into consideration at the same time and some more. Honesty is the best policy it seems, and not a fictitious candor. Now how deep that goes we will see in the sequel. Yes.

Student: "And you would call pleasant, I said, the things which participate in pleasure or create pleasure?"

Certainly, he said.

Then my meaning is that insofar as they are pleasant they are good; and my question would imply that pleasure is in itself a good.

According to your favorite mode of speech, Socrates, 'let us investigate this,' he said; and if the investigation is to the point, and the result proves that pleasure and good are really the same, then we will agree; but, if not, then we will argue."

You see, Protagoras has become an imitator of Socrates--the roles are completely changed. We have observed in an earlier passage where it appeared that he had become the Oddyseus whereas originally Socrates was the Oddyseus. Socrates does not reply to this remark; naturally he does not wish to rub it in. But this is now the situation. Socrates replies in a somewhat different

way.

Student: "And would you wish to begin the enquiry? I said; or shall I begin?

You ought to take the lead,...

Literally translated, "you are just in taking the lead," with this ambiguity of the expression that it is your right or your duty--they are undistinguishable. "You are just," why? "because you are in charge of the conversation." Socrates gives Protagoras another choice, as we have seen, and this time he chooses wisely; namely, to follow Socrates--because if Socrates is the leader, Protagoras is naturally the follower. Protagoras now deserves to rule because he is a sensible man but he is too just to [desire] it. He has made great progress. Good. Yes.

Student: "May I employ an illustration? I said. Suppose some one who is enquiring into the health or some other bodily function of another:--on the basis of that person's general appearance--he looks at his face and at the tips of his fingers,...

Well, it is not fingers. It is used in a broader sense--the visible part of the arm--not of the fingers only. So in other words, he would look at the most visible part of the body--the hands and the face. Yes.

Student: "and then he says, Uncover your chest and back to me that I may have a better view:--that is the sort of thing that I desire in this investigation. Having seen what your attitude is toward good and pleasure, I am minded to say to you: Uncover your mind to me, Protagoras, and reveal your attitude toward knowledge, that I may know...

Now let us stop here. Now Socrates is, as you see, the acknowledged leader and he makes full use of his leadership or rule. He is going to examine, not the good or the pleasant, but Protagoras. And he treats Protagoras as a physician treats a patient. Protagoras had doubted whether the good is identical with the pleasant and Socrates says, I understand where you stand regarding that and I suppose this means that you do not want to concede that the good is identical with the pleasant--perhaps you believe that the good is something different from the pleasant, we do not know. Now how do they go on?

Student: "that I may know whether you agree with the many. Now, the many are of opinion that knowledge is not a powerful, lordly, or commanding thing: they do not believe that it is being anything of that sort at all: but their notion is that a man may have knowledge, and yet that the knowledge which is in him may be over-mastered by anger,

or pleasure, or pain, or love, or perhaps by fear,--

No, "frequently by fear." That is the only thing which he said is frequent.

Student: "just as if knowledge were nothing but a slave, and might be dragged about by all these other things. Now, is that your view? or do you think that knowledge is a noble thing and fit to command in man, which cannot be overcome, and will not allow a man, if he only knows the good and the evil, to do anything which is contrary to what his knowledge bids him do but that wisdom will have strength to help him?"

I agree with you, Socrates, said Protagoras; and not only so, but I, above all other men, am bound to say that wisdom and knowledge are the mightiest of human things."

"Of the human things," yes. Now that is of some importance. Now, the many think that knowledge can be overcome by certain things. Now this thought of the many was shared, in a way, by Simonides, 305b, and there apparently proved by Socrates. It is rejected by Protagoras. Now he seems to qualify it at the end of the passage which we just read by the mention of the strongest of the "human" things. What does he mean by that? because there are other there are other things which are not human?

Student: Natural disasters.

For instance?

Student: The gods.

No, that is not necessary--by leaving open the distinction to what extent are these natural disasters god-sent? Yes.

Student: Chance, fate.

Yes, that would also belong to that but there is a somewhat broader connection. Protagoras had given an account of the whole in his myth and there it appeared that knowledge and mind were not ruling, but, they came in afterward--do you remember that? So, knowledge doesn't rule things in general; very far from it. But it rules, it can rule, the human things. The wise man is a man in whom the mind inside rules everything else; but, not in the universe. This is, I think, the meaning of that qualification.

Naturally there is a difference between a disaster, a mishap, and the passions, of which he speaks here. But one could perhaps say that the mishaps translate themselves into passions by fear, grief and so on. Now, clearly Protagoras says, I cannot possibly say that because I am the sophist, the man of the enlightenment.

He is bound to believe in the quasi-omnipotence of knowledge, at least in human affairs. Whereas those men not of the enlightenment, like Simonides and Socrates, are under no such compulsion. This seems to be clear.

There are five passions mentioned here. The enumeration is not quite clear but there are five; just as there were five virtues in 349b. I do not believe that there is any correspondence between these two enumerations. Let us see whether we can find some order. Pleasure and pain have to do with the present. Confidence and fear have to do with future evil. And eros, in the sense of desire, has to do with future good. This seems to be the underlying division. The five fundamental passions we can say.

So we have now almost all the premises of the following discussion but we still need a few more lines. Yes.

Student: "Good, I said, and true. But are you aware that the many of the humans do not share your conviction and mind, but claim that many people know the things which are best, but do not do them when they might? And most persons whom I have asked the reason of this have said that when men act contrary to knowledge they are overcome by pain, or pleasure, or some other of those things which I was just now mentioning."

Now Socrates and Protagoras agree, at least for the time being, as to the supremacy of knowledge; and the many deny it. And the many prove their point by their knowledge of the many; the judgment of the many about the many. Many knowing the better and able to do it choose the worse because they are overcome by pressure. Well, the point of the many is familiar to everyone of us. Someone should not smoke cigarettes and is overcome by the desire for cigarettes. And there are also harsher examples which you know I trust only from literature. Good. So, in other words, the phenomenon of being overcome by passion is incompatible, is unintelligible, if Socrates and Protagoras are right in saying that the ruling thing in the mind is knowledge. Now what does Protagoras say?

Student: "Yes, Socrates, he replied; and that is not the only point about which mankind are in error."

Yes, "the human beings;" we must insist on that translation. Protagoras dismisses the view of the many as the view of the many. "Who cares what these fools think!?" You see, he cared very much when Socrates spoke of the many, but of the Athenians, because he was in Athens and had to be careful. But the many in general, you can say the worst thing about them and nothing happens to you.

Now the many is replaced up to 358 beginning, this is a very long stretch, by the human beings. And this very strange thing,

which we must try, if we are able, to understand. Well, of course we will not take this snobbish posture of Protagoras and say, well, at first glance, the many have got a point. And secondly, Protagoras, being a teacher of the many must be willing to condescend to these poor fish after all. So that we do not know. Good. Yes.

Student: "Suppose, then, that you and I endeavour to persuade and explain to them what is the...

Yes, "the human beings," always this word. I am sorry if I have to be pedantic but otherwise you miss something.

Student: "what is the nature of this affect which they call 'being overcome by pleasure,' and which they affirm to be the reason why they do not always do what they recognize to be best. When we say to them: Friends,...

"Human beings." You see the key point is that these are human beings in general; not (the elite). That is the point. Yes.

Student: "Human beings, you are mistaken, and are saying what is not true, they would probably reply: Protagoras and Socrates, if this affect is not to be called 'being overcome by pleasure,' pray, tell us, what is it, and what you call it?
But why, Socrates, need we investigate the opinion of the humans...

"Of the many human beings."

Student: "of the many humans, who just say anything that comes to their head."

If the many wrongly assert that knowledge can be overcome by pleasure, one must give another account to the phenomenon to which they refer. Now suppose a man is not supposed to drink water and he can't restrain himself; these things happen.

Socrates and Protagoras are in the same boat regarding supremacy of knowledge, but, they differ regarding the good and the pleasant. The many deny the supremacy of knowledge. Where do they stand regarding the issue of pleasure and the good? Well, I think they implicitly deny that the good is the pleasant by the way in which they raise the question. So, let us draw a list of the positions taken respectively by Socrates, Protagoras and the human beings. Can someone make a drawing at the blackboard?

Socrates

good = pleasant
supremacy of knowledge

Protagoras

?
supremacy of knowledge

Human Beings

good differs from the pleasant
inferiority of knowledge

Can we not draw safely this inference that Protagoras is slightly closer than Socrates to the view of the many? Because in one point, Protagoras is not so clearly opposed to the many as Socrates is. Is this clear?

Now, despite this fact, Protagoras has a much greater contempt for the opinion of the many than Socrates has; as you see from his final remark. Or perhaps--this we cannot know--he does not wish to discuss this whole issue. And the reason might be this, if we take some contemporary examples as keys which is always legitimate but always dangerous: supremacy of knowledge means the superiority of the intellectuals to the nonintellectuals, in present-day language. And which intellectual wouldn't believe in this kind of supremacy? But to demand that within the individual intellectual, that the intellect should control his desire for reputation and wealth, this probably would go too far for him. Well, we must see to what extent this nasty suspicion is justified in the case of Protagoras.

So, now, the next point.

Student: "I believe, I said, that they may be of use in helping us to discover how courage is related to the other parts of virtue."

Yes. Now, the investigation of the popular view regarding the power of pleasure is important for the understanding of the relation of courage to the other virtues. Why? We find the key in the next line if you only begin the next sentence.

Student: "If you are disposed to abide by our agreement,...

Yes, "abide," to stick to, to stay there, to make it stand there, that is the key word. If knowledge is to be

quasi-omnipotent, it must be able to resist pleasure, it must be able to take a firm stand, it must include courage--the virtue by which we are able to take a firm stand. The so-called courage, which is swayed by pleasure, is not truly courage.

Now the power over the pleasures is ordinarily called temperance or moderation. And this would indeed mean that moderation and courage are identical; which would, of course, follow anyway, given the unity of the virtues. But this point is developed for example in the dialogue called at some length. Good. Now let us read the whole speech.

Student: "If you are disposed to abide by our agreement, that I should show the way in which, as I think, our recent difficulty is most likely to be cleared up, do you follow; but if not, never mind."

Yes, now Socrates gives Protagoras, as you see, another opportunity to make the same choice as he had done in 351e. He makes it now much more explicit however that Protagoras follows him; formerly, he had only spoken of his, Socrates, leading. This underlying suggestion.

There is a difficulty here which I cannot dispose of. "If you do not wish," "if it is agreeable to you, I let it go." And the Greek word is "I let it be pleased." Whether there is any indication of a broader content, I cannot say. The mere fact that there is a double conditional sentence--"if you do not wish, if it is all right with you"--is strange. I mention this only as one of the many points which I cannot resolve. Yes, now how does he go on?

Student: "Well, then, I said, let me suppose that they repeat their question, What account do you give of that which, in our way of speaking, is termed being overcome by pleasure? I should answer this: Listen, and Protagoras and I will endeavor to show you."

Yes, now, Socrates is going to tell the many on behalf of himself and Protagoras what the many mean when they say that the many are overcome by pleasure. It is very complicated I can tell. But the many have a just claim to hear what this phenomenon which is undeniable means if it does not mean intellect being overcome by pleasures. And Socrates will answer this question for them. He speaks now for Protagoras; Socrates has him in his hip pocket--he has nothing else for himself to say. Yes.

Student: "When men are overcome by eating and drinking and sexual desires which are pleasant, and they, knowing them to be evil, nevertheless indulge in

them, would you not say that they were overcome by pleasure? They will not deny this."

Now wait here for a moment. Now he addresses these men as human beings--this is important. When you speak of this thing overcome by pleasure you mean that you are overcome by sensual pleasures which are bad. That is the phenomenon they have in mind. Protagoras agrees that this is what the many would say. He is very cagey as you see.

Student: "And suppose that you and I were to go on and ask them again: 'In what way do you say that they are evil,--in that they are pleasant and give pleasure at the moment, or because they cause disease and poverty and other like evils in the future? Would they still be evil, if they simply gave pleasure and had no attendant evil consequences, regardless of the source and nature of the pleasure they gave?'--Would they not answer, Protagoras, that they are not evil on account of the pleasure of the moment which they give, but on account of the after-affects--diseases and the like?

I believe, said Protagoras, that the many would give this answer."

The many do not mean that those pleasant things by which they are overcome are bad because they are pleasant but they call them bad only with a view to their bad consequences. Protagoras cautiously agrees that this would be the answer of the many. He says, "I believe," I am not so familiar with them. You see.

Now, what about those pleasant and bad things which do not lead to sickness, poverty and the like? For example, undetected adultery; it would follow that the many would not say this is bad. Or, take the other case of a deserter who through his desertion escapes death and wounds and acquires wealth (such cases have been reported); again the many would be unable to regard this as bad. I mention this only because this subject will come up later on after the discussion with the many is completely finished. Now what does Socrates say on that?

Student: "And in causing diseases do they not cause pain? and in causing poverty do they not cause pain;--they would agree to that also, if I am not mistaken?"

No, "I believe." Yes.

Student: "Protagoras assented."

You see Socrates imitates now Protagoras' caution and caginess, "I believe." Socrates and Protagoras completely agree that the many would understand by the bad consequences of pleasures, unpleasant consequences.

Student: "Then should I say to them, in my name and yours: humans, do you think them evil for any other reason, except because they end in pain and rob us of other pleasures:--there again they would agree?"

We both of us thought that they would."

Now the agreement between Socrates and Protagoras, not regarding pleasure and pain, but, regarding the opinion of the many is even more complete, we can say, than it was before. The bad means what lacks pleasure or what is painful. Yes, now?

Student: "And then we should take the question from the opposite point of view, and say: 'Humans, when you speak of goods being painful, do you not mean remedial goods, such as gymnastic exercises, and military service,...

By military service he means military campaigns.

Student: "and the physician's use of burning, cutting, drugging and starving? Are these the things which are good but painful?' They would assent to me? He agreed.

'And do you call them good because they occasion the greatest immediate suffering and pain; or because, afterwards, they bring health and physical well-being and the salvations of Cities and power over others and wealth?'...

Power and wealth are also used in the plural.

Student: "--they would agree to the latter alternative, as I believe?"

Good. Now the good things which are unpleasant; in contradistinction to the bad things which are pleasant, are unpleasant now and have good consequences in the future. Socrates does not in any way question the vulgar view here. Rule over others and wealth is as good an end of military campaigns as the salvation of the city. You see it is truly addressed to the vulgar opinion, to the human beings. Yes?

Student: Those things also have to be bad for rule over other cities--that is a bad end.

Very Good and how do you go on from there? to what extent do you consider the others?

Student: Well, in the view of the many I suppose that is not considered but in Socrates' view...

Yes, but still, the question itself--under what heading would it come?

Student: What sort of thing is the good?

Student: Is the good just?

Yes, justice--justice completely abstract. I mean moderation is the control of desires and courage, the control of fears and that is part of the whole story. It is very good that you mentioned that. Yes, and also in the way he regards waging war merely for the sake of enrichment and in particular for the enrichment of the individuals here as the goal of questioning is, of course, remarkable. Now let us go on.

Student: "'Are these things good for any other reason except that they end in pleasure, and get rid of and avert pain? Are you looking to any other standard but pleasure and pain when you call them good?' They would acknowledge that they were not?

I think so, said Protagoras."

No, wait, "as I believe." "Nor does it seem to me." You see, Protagoras remains as cagey as he was before. Socrates then says clearly that the good is the pleasant. The many have no other standard than the pleasant. The good things which they choose, they choose as pleasant or with a view to their pleasant consequences. Protagoras agrees that the many would say that. He doesn't say anything about his view up to this point. Yes.

Student: "'And do you not pursue pleasure as a good, and avoid pain as an evil?'"

And you in this case can't come out in the English, but it is the plural and means the many, not Protagoras.

Student: "'Then you think that pain is an evil and pleasure is a good: and even pleasure you deem an evil, when it robs you of greater pleasures than it gives, or causes pains greater than the pleasure. If, however, you call pleasure an evil in relation to some other end or standard, you will be able to show us that standard. But you have none to show.' I do not think that they have, said Protagoras."

You see, the many regard certain pleasant things as bad only from the point of view of pleasure. Protagoras again agrees as to the many holding this view. Socrates is very circumstantial here, as you see but for one reason: he speaks to the many, people supposedly slow-witted. And while this is easy to understand--everyone knows this hedonism since his childhood, more or less, today--but it makes us easily forget this strange happening here. While what is taught is very simple to understand, the way in which it is taught is very complicated because we must also see that Socrates wants to convince Protagoras and Protagoras doesn't say a word; Protagoras only says the many would say that and he keeps his own view back. Yes, now where were we? in d4 I believe?

Student: "'And again have you not a similar way of speaking about pain? You call pain a good when it takes away greater pains than those which it has, or gives pleasures greater than the pains: then if you have some other standard than pleasure and pain to which you refer when you call actual pain a good, you can show what that is. But you cannot.'

True, said Protagoras."

Yes, a slightly different answer. The many regard certain unpleasant things as good; of course, also with a view toward pleasure, there is no independent standard. Protagoras' reply is now ambiguous. He doesn't say, that is what the many say. Is he now willing to concede that the good is identical with the pleasant, as Socrates wants him to concede? We do not know. Well, I will only tell you one thing that you all have heard somewhere, sometime, and somehow about the calculus of pleasures and the whole moral problem consists of a calculus of pleasures. This is the thought that is here developed for the first time. And if this is true--if the moral problem is a calculus of pleasure--then, of course, virtue is knowledge. Choosing the good--meaning choosing the pleasant--and that is a mathematical problem; well, in the mathematics of pleasure which is not quite the same as the mathematics of numbers. And that is what he is working his way to. But the circumstantial and elaborate character is due not to the novelty of the thought, because the thought is easy to follow, but to the particular caginess of Protagoras who does not wish to grant what Socrates wants him to grant for some reasons which we do not yet know. Yes.

Student: "Suppose again, I said, that the world says to me: 'Why do you spend many words and speak in many ways on this subject?'"

You see, "why such a long disquisition? We have understood you all along." So, thing which bothers us--the length of this disquisition-- bothers even the many. Yes.

Student: "Excuse me, humans, I should reply; but in the first place there is a difficulty in explaining the meaning of the expression 'overcome by pleasure'; and the whole argument turns upon this. And even now, if you see any possible way in which evil can be explained as other than pain, or good as other than pleasure, you may still retract. Are you satisfied, then, at having a life of pleasure which is without pain? If you are, and if you are unable to show any good or evil which does not end in pleasure and pain, hear the consequences:....

Yes, you see here Socrates speaks for himself: "if you were to ask me, I would reply." He disassociates himself now from Protagoras; in other words, he reminds Protagoras of the difference between them regarding the relation of the good and the pleasant or regarding the relation of courage and wisdom.

Socrates tells these people, the many, by what you have already admitted, you are already refuted. He gives them an opportunity to retract their admissions just as he had to Protagoras--he treats the many as he had treated Protagoras. And this is, of course, justified because we do not know where Protagoras stands; maybe he shares the view of the many. Yes.

Student: "--If what you say is true, then the statement is absurd which affirms that a man often does evil knowingly, when he might abstain, because he is seduced and overpowered by pleasure; or again, when you say that a man knowingly refuses to do what is good because he is overcome by pleasure of the moment. And that this is ridiculous will be evident if only we give up the use of various names, such as pleasant and painful, and good and evil. As there are two things, let us call them by two names--first, good and evil, and then pleasant and painful. Assuming this, let us go on to say that a man does evil knowing that he does evil. But some one will ask, Why? Because he is overcome, is the first answer."

No, "but if someone asks us."

Student: "And by what is he overcome? the enquirer will proceed to ask."

No, "we will say."

Student: "And we shall no longer be able to reply 'By pleasure,' for the name of pleasure has been exchanged for that of good. In our answer, then, we shall only say that he is overcome. 'By what?' he will reiterate. By the good, we shall have to reply;...

"By Zeus." Well, the proposal of Socrates is extremely simple: if the good is the pleasant and the bad is the unpleasant, then let us use only one pair of these opposites; otherwise we confuse the issue. Let us speak either of good and bad or of unpleasant. Now if we apply this, if the good is the pleasant, it is ridiculous to say men choose the bad knowing that it is bad because they are overcome by the pleasure for they mean that men choose the bad knowing that it is bad because they are overcome by the good--a ridiculous statement. And this is emphasized by the fact that Socrates swears here, "by Zeus." You know, he swears very rarely in the Protagoras, apart from the Hippocrates section; only one oath of Protagoras, only one oath of Prodicus, and one oath of Socrates. And this is the last one, after a long time. Who swears? Obviously Socrates and someone else: "By the good, we shall say by Zeus." It could be Socrates alone but it also could mean that it belongs to , that is very dark. Yes.

Student: "Nay, but our questioner will rejoin with a laugh, if he be one of the swaggering sort,...

Immediately after the oath there is this reference to the men of insolent pride or men given to mockery and laughing. Yes.

Student: "'That is too ridiculous, that a man should do what he knows to be evil when he ought not, because he is overcome by good. Is that,' he will ask, 'because the good was worthy or not worthy of conquering the evil?' And in answer to that we shall obviously reply, Because it was not worthy; for if it had been worthy, then he who, as we say, was overcome by pleasure, would not have been wrong....

In other words, we blame this man and therefore the thing which he preferred must not have deserved to have been preferred.

Student: "'But how,' he will reply...

He omits "perhaps," I do not know why.

Student: "'But how,' he will perhaps reply, 'can the good be unworthy of the evil, or the evil of the good?' Is not the real explanation that they are out of proportion to one another, either as greater and smaller, or more and fewer? This we cannot deny."

You see Socrates is now surely speaking together with the many against this invisible questioner whom he has conjured out of pure thought.

Student: "And when you speak of being overcome--'what do you mean,' he will say, 'but that you choose the greater evil in exchange for the lesser good?' Admitted. And now let us substitute the names of pleasure and pain for good and evil, and say, not as before,..."

Now, one moment. The questioner might solve the difficulty--he might say perhaps--by saying that men get the greater evil as a prize of the lesser good. And somehow this seems to be a satisfactory answer. Why is it satisfactory? He takes away this whole difficulty--these two couples of opposites--we have only one couple of opposites. And something else? Well, if you do not see it now, you will soon see it in the sequel. Good.

Student: "And now let us substitute the names of pleasure and pain for good and evil,..."

So, do you see what Socrates proposes? The vulgar statement, the ordinary statement, is in terms of two pairs of opposites--good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant--and this leads to confusion. Either we must read it in terms of a single pair of opposites--we have stated the difficulty now in terms of the opposites good and bad; and now we state it in terms of the opposites pleasant and unpleasant. Socrates talks too for slow learners because others might be able to figure it out on the basis of the first one.

Student: Is it where in his first version--the greater evil and the lesser good--he has now managed to show that being overcome is merely a matter of bad measure?

Yes, although it is not yet brought out. Exactly. Now let us read the sequel.

Student: "And now let us substitute the names of pleasure and pain for good and evil, and say, not as before, that a man does what is evil knowingly, but that he does what is painful knowingly, and because he is overcome by pleasure which is unworthy to overcome."

Are there any circumstances under which pleasure is inferior to pain other than when there is an excess and defect in their mutual relation, which means that they become greater and smaller, and more and fewer, and differ in degree? For if any one says: 'Yes, Socrates, but pleasure of the moment differs widely from future pleasure and pain'--to that I should reply: And do they differ in anything but in pleasure and pain? There is nothing else. And do you, like a skillful weigher, put in the balance the pleasures and the pains, and their nearness and distance, and weigh them, and then say which outweighs the other. If you weigh pleasures against pleasures, you of course should take the more and greater; or if you weigh pains against pains, you should take the fewer and the less; or if pleasures against pains, then that course of action in which the painful is exceeded by the pleasant, whether the distant by the near or the near by the distant; and you avoid that course of action in which the pleasant is exceeded by the painful. Would you not admit, o humans, that this is true? I know that they cannot deny this. He agreed with me."

Well, you see, no direct speech and he held the same view. Protagoras is here in no way visible, although the whole thing is meant for him.

Now the same story is now repeated from the point of view of the opposition of the pleasant and the painful. Man chooses the painful, knowing that it is painful, overcome by pleasure. But there is no reference to anything being ridiculous, there is no use of an oath in this connection. But something new, more clearer than in the other passage. "Weighing." The thing that will save us is the weighing, measuring, counting of pleasures. And now we will discuss this in detail next time but this leads then on to the proposal: what we need is science, wisdom--the science of weighing and counting the good. And that is exactly what the sophists do. Let us anticipate this so that we are not completely in the dark. Let us read now 357d at the end and e.

Student: "and you admitted further, that they err, not only from defect of knowledge in general, but of that particular knowledge which, as you also agreed earlier in the discussion, is called measuring. And you are also aware that the erring act which is done without knowledge is done in ignorance. This, therefore, is the meaning of being overcome by pleasure;--ignorance, and that the greatest. And our friends Protagoras and Prodicus and Hippias declare that they are the physicians of ignorance; but you, who

are under the mistaken impression that ignorance is not the cause, and that the art of which I am speaking cannot be taught, neither go yourselves, nor send your children, to the Sophists, who are the teachers of these things--you are concerned about your money and give them none; and the result is, that you are the worse off both in public and private life:--....

Yes, in other words, Socrates makes a case for sophistry much more powerful than Protagoras ever did. He beats him on his own ground. You know he had beat him on many grounds but now even on his own ground. Now let us look at our poor Hippocrates after the discussion has arrived at this point. What will Hippocrates do now? I mean if we do not go beyond that?

Student: Give his money to Socrates.

To Socrates? Why not to Protagoras?

Student: Because Socrates has proven to be the better of the two.

I see. But if he is slightly less intelligent than perhaps you and takes quite literally what Socrates says?

Student: [inaudible]

What do you mean by that? I mean which degree of depth is appropriate?

Student: [inaudible]

Yes, but what does this mean when we are confronted by such a specific question?

But here we have this point that Socrates has proven to the satisfaction of the wisest men present--Protagoras, Hippias, and Prodicus--why are they satisfied?

Student: Because it supports their contention.

Yes, it is to their interest. Very simple, sure. Just like medicine would not be disliked by the A.M.A. That is clear.

Student: It seems to me that the most likely candidate for Hippocrates is Hippias.

Very good, very good. Why?

Student: Measuring.

So, in other words, Socrates beats the drum for sophistry but not for the brand of Protagoras. Protagoras had spoken with contempt for the arts of measurement--Hippias' specialty. So, Protagoras cannot be too pleased and if Hippocrates has any understanding he sees that the notion to go to Protagoras isn't good. Then he has to sweat through mathematics which he won't like anyway... But, still, I think that is crucial.

But what about this argument itself? If we can measure and weigh the pleasures and pains, only then can we make wise choices. Well, he gives later on the example of the errors we commit regarding things owing to distance or nearness. A house looks bigger farther away and so we have to measure it to see what the true greatness of the house is as opposed to the appearing greatness. Now the true pleasure afforded by a present beauty queen, how do you measure that against bad consequences. I mean, well, I suppose you know what the possible bad consequences are. But there is another simple point, a key point, which you have to take into consideration and where the example is not quite fit. Because in the case of things in space, as we say, distances, we measure them; that is not too difficult. But what about the distances in time? In the first place say past pleasures and pains would in no way enter into our calculations. What about the future?

Student: There is always a question as to whether they will be fulfilled.

Because of the power of chance. Yes, but still there is one clear point--how far ahead should you look? Should you look forward to one hundred twenty years or only to seventy, or maybe only fifty? It makes a difference. And furthermore there comes up this question, if you are confronted with what we call the presence of death is it still possible for most people to measure and count and figure quietly, without being afraid of death? That is also a point because we have not only to consider pleasure and pain in the narrow sense but of course also fears and expectations. There are quite a few difficulties. Yes?

Student: What about the Simonides section? Must we say now that Socrates is criticizing or disagreeing with the Simonides section?

I do not know. I mean, hitherto I have not found a clear sign of that. By the way, you must not forget this sketch of a hedonistic doctrine. When Xenophon makes an experiment with hedonism in his dialogue called Hero, he entrusts that to Simonides the poet. Simonides, if I remember well, was said to have coined the word, the Greek word for pleasure. Whatever may be wrong with Simonides, that does not come out in this dialogue. I mean, the question more

generally stated is why the identification of the good and pleasant as the basis of the argument? Now one way of answering the question is what follows from this premise, what does Socrates get out of it? And we see he gets out of it the justification of sophistry. In other words, under what conditions would it make sense to say that virtue is knowledge and teachable in the way the Sophists taught it? And he answers that question in this way: if the object of human action were homogeneous, in such a way that they can be figured out more and less by measuring and so on, in that case virtue would be knowledge. But, of course, it forgets one little thing. The best art of measuring that would enable a man only to say that this is better than that, would it guarantee that he would overcome the pleasure of the moment or the fear of the moment? You know, this difficulty would, of course, remain.

Now when we look at that--and I will try to look at it more fully later--courage is the great theme here as we know and that would mean in terms of the specific question of being overcome by fears. But instead the chief subject is overcome by pleasures. Now what does this silence about being overcome by fears mean? And fear is of course the question of courage.

Student: It would seem that only in the question of being overcome by pleasures can you even stop for this kind of calculation. Being overcome by fear is an immediate kind of thing.

Well, I mean, think of this beauty queen under particularly attractive circumstances...well, I am not good at developing these kinds of things but I hear there are people who write about such matters in great detail--this is perhaps not so simple, but again you have to consult the proper literature. But I have no doubt that the danger of present death--someone pointing a gun at you when you don't have a gun--would probably induce almost all men to forget about pleasures. That is a profound truth underlying Hobbes' doctrine and some other doctrines. But what I am driving at is something else. How should I begin to make this clear?

In a Platonic dialogue we must always think about the subject matter--in this case pleasure, pain, fear, etc.--but we must also never forget about the individuals, the characters. Now the chief character of this dialogue is, as the title indicates, Protagoras. Now what about Protagoras in this, is he such a hero regarding self-control? Well, we don't know. We don't know. One thing we do know because he had made it very clear earlier in the dialogue. Now let me do like very poor teachers who phrase the question for their end. No, I won't because it wouldn't work at this point. But there is one striking difference between pleasures--and let us take this greatest example, sexual pleasure--and the fear of death. Now do we know anything in general about them from the literature?

about their distribution among the various age groups? I think we do and the literature is easily available--Plato's Republic beginning, Cephalus. He is an old man and he is so glad to be old because he is no longer subject to that savage master sexual desire. But he has another problem instead of it which he did not have before--fear of death. So, crudely spoken, this kind of desire, sexual desire, is more characteristic of youth and fear of death is more characteristic of old age. In which group does Protagoras belong? I mean is he young, is he old?

Student: He is old.

He says so. He could be the father of everyone present. He is as old, let us say, as Cephalus. Does he show any trace of fear of death?

Student: He took Socrates' advice regarding speaking in Athens.

Sure, but that does not necessarily mean fear of death; it could mean fear of inconvenience, if he has to leave town within an hour that is very unpleasant.

Student: He was cautious about answering the question of the good being the pleasant.

Yes, but does he show in his conduct any sign of fear of death? I believe we can say no. And I will make this tentative suggestion: that he is in this sense of the term a courageous man. And then we have a paradoxical situation: Hippocrates is courageous (the potential pupil) and Protagoras is courageous (the potential teacher.) That is a ground on which they can meet. But the thing goes somewhat deeper and that is the point to which one of you alluded.

Protagoras' peculiarity, as he points out is his frankness, his candor. He takes the risk which no one has taken before--a courageous man. Now from this point of view, certain features which we have observed but which we have not sufficiently understood or appreciated become important. We are in hades, you know, by the allusions to Homer. Socrates has gone down to hades, to the world of the dead. And it is in those days nothing dreary or terrible about it. Protagoras was compared to Achilles, the man of courage--not to Achilles in hades because in hades Achilles had lost all belief in courage and said it is much better to be a day laborer in the light of the sun than to be a great hero. Now then, of course, we would have to watch and examine Protagoras' courage, particularly what kind of courage it is. In the case of Hippocrates we can be sure--well, this is a young boy of say eighteen who is very good at pursuing runaway slaves, and if that is manliness or courage then he is courageous. But is it true manliness? And we would have to raise the question regarding Protagoras' manliness as well.

Is his courage due to his wisdom? Well, we would have to know first is he wise? I believe that we can say without exaggeration that he is not wise. And a man who says, I teach virtue, and who has not given serious thought to the question of whether virtue is one or many cannot be called wise. So his courage is really different from wisdom. His courage is due to his excellent health and great success in the world, i.e. to a kind of being well-advised--a kind of it. And above all a man who says, I come to Athens and I can make every Athenian good better than anyone else could have made; that requires a kind of courage. In other words, to what extent is his courage the same to what we would now call his nerve? Now to take an extreme step which is a necessary suggestion it may not be tenable in the long run.

Now he is not wise. This much we know. How far is he moderate and just? That is hard to say because here he doesn't steal silver spoons or anything else. Impious? We do not know directly but a bit. Now let us look at 349d5.

Student: Many men are utterly unrighteous, impious, self-indulgent, ignorant, who are nevertheless remarkable for their courage.

I believe that it is important and I am glad that I saw that Hippocrates is courageous and then I saw that Protagoras is in a sense very courageous--I mean is not a man who raises an enormous claim which he cannot possibly fulfill, can one not say in the loose meaning of the term that this man has an amazing courage?

Student: But isn't this really foolhardiness?

Yes, that is clear. In other words the question would still remain that in the strict sense of the term can there be courage without wisdom? does not courage imply wisdom? But I remind you of the three questions with which I started. Why the courage question? I believe I have given at least materials useful in answering that. Why the hedonistic proposition? And why this long discussion with the human beings and their irrelevant opinions about pleasure and pain?

Student: I don't understand on what grounds that they were in hades? But I suppose it was the loose meaning...

Oh no, no, no that was very strict. You know the answer. When he describes what was going on he quotes verses from the Odyssey which Odysseus uses for describing hades, about the individuals in hades. Good.

There is a fourth question: how to give the examination. I think you will need a special session to coach you for the examination.

Plato's Protagoras. A course by Professor Leo Strauss
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We stopped around 356c if I remember well. That is Socrates discussion with Protagoras together with the human beings, or with the many, the vulgar. I remind you briefly of the context. There was one passage which we did not sufficiently consider.

Now the question is this: according to both Socrates and Protagoras, knowledge, science, is a most powerful thing in man. And yet we see that people knowing the better choose the worse, overcome by pleasure and other passions. But the human beings who make this objection understand by better or worse, or rather by good and bad, the pleasant and the painful. That was explained to them at painful length. And that means that people knowing the more pleasant choose the more painful, overcome by pleasure. Do I have to illustrate it by a homely example or is it clear enough? Good.

So now let us turn first to 356a5 to 7. Well, first read 356a all together to see the context.

Student: "Are there any circumstances in which pleasure is inferior to pain other than when there is an excess and defect in their mutual relation, which means that they become greater and smaller, and more and fewer, and differ in degree? For if any one says: "Yes, Socrates, but the pleasure of the moment differs widely from future pleasure and pain"--

Yes, that is the one we need. It is true that the pleasure we have at a given moment--say from some candies or a cigarette --may be very trivial compared with the pain which we get afterward. Yet there is an enormous difference between the present pleasure and the future pain; the present has a singular power. The difference between present and future is not the difference in regard to quantity of pleasure. In other words, the pleasure of the candy now is quantitatively the same as the pleasure of the candy at some future or any other time. Now if present pleasure is "x" and the pain to which it leads is $1/1000x$, one must forego the present pleasure--everyone holds that. It is as simple as that.

But does not the present, as these vulgar people say, have a much greater power than the remote? This is a difficulty with which Socrates is still saddled, and Protagoras too.

Now let us then go on from where we left off last time; that is 356c4.

Student: "He agreed with me.

Well, then, I shall say, if you agree so far, be so good as to answer me a question: Do not objects of the same size appear larger to your sight when near, and smaller when at a distance? They will acknowledge that."

Who says that?

Student: It seems to be Socrates.

No, it is Protagoras. Now he discusses now the way the masses answer the question how presence, nearness, and future, remoteness, affect how magnitudes appear to the many, these ants on whom we look down. Protagoras agrees with what Socrates says about what the many will say--you remember his caginess from last time; he doesn't wish to be caught.

Student: "And the same holds of thickness and number; also sounds, which are in themselves equal, are greater when near, and lesser when at a distance."

Yes, now wait. Now he applies what is true of length to number, of manyness, and of thickness, and of sounds. Now I do not quite understand this selection of the examples. Now what is Protagoras' answer here?

Student: "They will grant that also."

No, "They would say that." So Protagoras' answer here is slightly qualified. Perhaps we find a reason in what follows.

Student: "Now suppose doing well to consist in doing or choosing the greater, and in not doing or in avoiding the less, what would be the saving principle..."

"The greater length," literally, otherwise great might be misunderstood. In other words, if our happiness would consist in getting the greatest possible length...yes, good.

Student: "...what would be the saving principle of human life?"

Now, more simply, "what would be the salvation of life?" The salvation of life meaning of life as such plus happiness, of course. Good. Yes.

Student: "Would it be the art of measuring; or the power of appearance?"

"The power of what comes to sight." You know that...the powerful example of the candy, now, as being now, before us. A power that the candy would not have, say, in Indochina. Yes.

Student: "Is not the latter that deceiving art which makes us wander up and down and take the things..."

"Art," he says? It is of course not an art; the power of the appearing things is not an art. "The power of the appearing..."

Student: "...that deceiving power which makes us wander up and down and take the things at one time of which we repent at another, both in our actions and in our choice of things great and small? But the art of measurement would invalidate the power of appearances, and, showing the truth, would fain teach the soul at last to find lasting rest in the truth, and would thus save our life. Would not mankind generally acknowledge that the art which accomplishes this result is the art of measurement?"

Again, "the human beings," there is this ambiguity.

Student: "Yes, he said, the art of measurement."

Yes, so, in other words, here again: would the many, the humans not agree? Both the many and Protagoras agree, but, they agree to different things. The many agree that the measuring art is the help and Protagoras only agrees that the many would say so.

In the case of length, lengths, we deprive the appearances of their power by the art of measuring. I believe that this does not need any comment. If we see a man very far away, he looks as if he were two feet high. And then we send someone there, or perhaps by some clever devices we can measure him from here, and we see he is six-foot. And then, of course, the impression he makes on us is completely exploded by the measuring. Yes, that is clear. But since he has referred to sounds; can sounds be measured? Or, to make it more simple, can smells be measured? We say that one smell is stronger or greater than another, or lesser than another, but can we measure? By preferring now a pleasant smell to an unpleasant one, we might get in the end a terrible stench. That is the same problem. Do we need measuring in order to prefer now the unpleasant smell to that perfume? And does measuring as such overcome the attractiveness of the present, pleasant smell? After all, this fellow who looks two feet high is not attractive. It doesn't make the slightest difference to us if we find out if he is six feet high.

At any rate, not in all cases it seems can the power of the appearance be overcome by the measuring. Now the example of sounds is not so very good because today we would, of course, speak of wave lengths. But these are no longer sounds as sounds; these are things which go with sounds. And now I believe there are no smell waves are there? Do they have any device for measuring smells?

Student: No, no it's quite complicated chemistry.

In other words, we have for all practical purposes to rely on our sense of smell. So in this situation the basis is unchanged. Yes.

Student: I'm not quite clear on that because there really is no example given and secondly for sound, there is no mention of the quality of sound--discord and harmony--it seems to be just...

No, he speaks here only of greater and smaller sounds. Well, if someone fires a gun here and if he fires it say at City Hall then obviously the sound we hear in this room would be much greater than the sound we would hear when...that is what he means, it is very simple.

Student: All right, so why isn't the art of measuring the important thing?

Yes, well, the point is this: there is no application made in the sequel of the art of measuring sounds anyway. So, in other words, the fact that there is in a certain dimension the greater and the lesser does not yet prove that there is an art measurement then. That is the point I tried...and since I thought the example of smell is more simple, because we don't know of smell waves in the way in which we know of sound waves, that was the only reason I mentioned that. But it is perfectly legitimate, of course, excuse the example of smell...or to the thing of sound or to the thing of smell or of other things where there, other sense perceptions, where there is...for example, something is more pungent. Some food is more pungent than the other is also more and less and there is not necessarily an art of measurement. You expose your tongue to both sense impressions and where you get the stronger impression then you say the taste is stronger.

But disregarding these grave difficulties, in the case which Socrates mentions regarding sheer length, by measuring instead of merely trusting the sense experience, we bring it about that the soul stands by the truth, abides by the truth. Here again is the connection between knowledge and courage; if courage means to stand by something respectable, say the truth. This firmness of knowledge is something akin to the firmness of the courageous man. It brings it also about that we save our lives, as he puts it here, and saving our lives is at least not the primary function of courage. You see the problem with which we are concerned here is the relation between knowledge and courage.

The answer of Protagoras is ambiguous; one can also say that he admits that he agrees as well as the many do. This is not quite as unambiguous as I said before. Now we come to another complication.

Student: "Suppose, again, the salvation of human life to depend on the choice of odd and even, and on the knowledge of when a man ought to choose the greater or less, either in reference to the same quantity or to

another, and whether near or at a distance; what would be the principle...

No "principle," what would save us our lives? Plato speaks less of principle than we, including the translators of Plato, do. Yes. Which means that he doesn't think less of principle than we and the translators do. Yes.

Student: "Would not knowledge?--a knowledge of measuring, since this is the art that has to do with excess and defect, and a knowledge of number, when the question is of odd and even? The many humans will assent, will they not?"

No, now is this art, since the subject is odd and even, any art other than arithmetic, he says. Yes. The many humans would agree with us? Now.

Student: "Protagoras himself thought that they would."

"They seemed to agree, it seemed also to Protagoras." "It seemed to Protagoras that they would agree." This is a much more qualified answer here.

Now here is a complication. Now in the raising of the question here regarding the more or less--and this is of course a very good example because people are concerned with getting richer and richer which means more dollars, more than can be expressed in American terms, and that is very appropriate here. But here the question is not simply choosing more but choosing more at the right time. You see that? Read it again if there is any doubt about it. "When" one should correctly choose the more and "when" the less. In other words there is a certain criticism of the so-called (homoeconomikeois) who doesn't raise the question in this form, except accidentally, because it might... The many would not see this crucial difference and Protagoras therefore disassociates himself from him again. But these are, of course, only examples: the art of measurement and the art of counting (because that is the meaning arithmetic has for the Greeks. What we call arithmetic was called by them logistics, the operation with numbers. Arithmetic is the knowledge of numbers as numbers; it, of course, has nothing to do with the modern theory of numbers, but, it is simply the knowledge of numbers. For example, if you have a very high and unusual number, of course always natural numbers, then you know what the next number would be. Say 456,812, we all know that it would be 456,813 but someone who has not learned numbers would not know it.) Yes?

Student: You say that Protagoras disassociates himself from the answer of the many here because what is involved is additional considerations. But Socrates' question seems to be based on that preceding difference; it

seems to take that into account. In other words, he is saying, well, it depends on measurement in order to make a right choice and then he says, people would admit this would they not? It seems to me that people do take it into account.

Ah no. The key point is that the consideration of the right moment is not an arithmetical consideration. If it is a question of getting more and more money, that is easy--one million dollars is more than eight hundred thousand dollars. But whether one should do it now and whether that is the proper situation, the proper occasion, that we are not told by arithmetic. Good, now let us continue. Because now we come from the examples to our case. Yes.

Student: "Well then humans, I say to them; seeing that the salvation of life is found to consist in the right choice of pleasures and pains,...

I.e. not of numbers or of lengths because these were only examples to illustrate. Yes.

Student: "--in the choice of the more and the fewer, and the greater and the less, and the nearer and remoter, must not this measuring be a consideration of their excess and defect and equality in relation to each other?

This is undeniably true.

And this, as possessing measure, must undeniably also be an art and science?

They will agree, he said."

"They" will agree, he doesn't say that. Good. Now in the case of pleasure as distinguished from sheer length and sheer number, one would have to consider the more or the less, the greater or the smaller, and the remoter and the nearer. Thus we would need an art of measurement which is at the same time ordinary art of measurement and the art of arithmetic and yet preserves the temporal distance element; in other words takes into due consideration the present pleasure as a terrific attraction--a consideration which is not necessary in the other fields. So, we have to consider, in order to act wisely, that this pleasure will bring us pain. But then again, practically speaking, when? When in sixty years from now I believe in the case of a man of my age there would be no consideration against it. Well, you see. But this question is wholly alien to the strictly mathematical arts. Good. But at any rate, this is all admitted by the human beings and Protagoras, admitting that they would admit it, we have perfect agreement. And this will find its seal, its confirmation, very soon. Yes.

Student: "The nature of this art or science will be a matter of future consideration;...

One second; no, "what these art and science are, we will consider on another occasion." Now, in other words, we do not yet...it has been proven that we need this kind of a measuring art, which is not the ordinary measuring art, but, what it is and where we find it and perhaps whether it is possible, this will not be settled in the Protagoras. So, we get a wonderful blank check and not more and do not know whether Protagoras or Socrates has anything on his bank, a phenomenon which we know also from present day phenomena. Yes, go on.

Student: "But a demonstration that it is a science has been adequately made, and that is what you asked of me and Protagoras. At the time when you asked the question, if you remember, both of us were agree ing that there was nothing mightier than knowledge, and that knowledge, in whatever existing, must prevail over pleasure and all other things; and then you said that pleasure...

"You" said. Let us say the intellectuals say that the intellect is the more powerful thing and the nonintellectuals deny it--the line is as sharply drawn. Yes.

Student: "often prevails even over a man who has knowledge; and we refused to allow this, and you rejoined: O Protagoras and Socrates, what is the meaning of being overcome by pleasure if not this?--tell us what you call such an event:--if we had immediately and at the time answered 'Ignorance,' you would have laughed at us. But now, in laughing at us, you will be laughing at yourselves:...

Yes, now, why, how has it been proven that it is only a matter of ignorance? By the example of length and other things; very simply, an optical illusion which can be corrected by measuring. And if someone would see, to take an example from Rousseau which is impressive, from his Emile when he speaks that there were quite stricter notions that prevailed than those that do today, what shall you do with a young man in order to prevent him from having intercourse too early in age? outside of marriage? And Rousseau has a very simple device which he got from an old army officer. This man took his young son into a hospital of people in the last stages of syphilis and said this is what is in store for you and that made a very deep impression on the boy. Something of this kind is in another way, of course, always possible--perhaps still in this way. So, at any rate, now they have learned that what overcomes them is just ignorance; they do not see themselves as being ruined by such things or by the loss of their property

or loss of reputation or whatever it may be...That has now been settled.

Now here when Socrates says, "you ask us," he repeats literally what was said in 353a4 to 6. It is a very rare case of a literal repetition in Plato. The quotation marks are, of course, the additions of the modern editor; there are no quotation marks. There is only one tiny little change. He says now, "tell us," he uses now the plural; whereas, in the first version he had used the dual. In Greek there is a word, the dual form, which means you two. You two eat is grammatically different from you, more than two. And this trivial difference is however of some importance because at that time there were only Socrates and Protagoras and now many because this will prepare what happens in the near future enlargement of the Socrates-Protagoras group into one embracing also Hippias and Prodicus as we shall see very soon. And that he quotes so literally and reproducing a statement of the human beings is, of course, in accordance with the presupposed view of the human beings. Here you have to be very literal because of their lack of flexibility. We will find another case shortly later where he quotes Protagoras and where the changes are much greater. Because in the case of an intelligent man he wouldn't stick to every particular word which is not decisively important. But a man who is not flexible and thinks every literal word might count has no judgment of what is important and what is not--every little word might count--I believe that this is the simplest explanation. Yes.

Student: "for you also admitted that men err in their choice of pleasures and pains; that is, in their choice of good and evil, from defect of knowledge; and you admitted further, that they err, not only from defect of knowledge in general, but of that particular knowledge which, as you also agreed earlier in the discussion, is called measuring."

"The art of measuring," yes.

Student: "And you are also aware that the erring act which is done without knowledge is done in ignorance. This, therefore, is the meaning of being overcome by pleasure; --ignorance, and that the greatest. And our friends Protagoras and Prodicus and Hippias declare that they are the physicians of ignorance; but you, who are under the mistaken impression that ignorance is not the cause, and that the art of which I am speaking cannot be taught, neither go yourselves, nor send your children to the Sophists, who are the teachers of these things--

More literal, "you do not send them to the teachers of those things, these Sophists here."

Student: "you who are concerned about your money and give them none; and the result is, that you are the worse off both in public and private life:..."

Yes, now this is the conclusion of this section. Socrates presents himself here as a man who incites people, who pushes people forward to sophistry--the Greek word is . That is, of course, terrific.

Now Socrates teaches here Protagoras how he should make propaganda, as you would say, for his own art. This is the way to do it; not in the way you do it. And he also shows that Protagoras' claim to teach virtue stands and falls by the identification of virtue and knowledge, which Protagoras was unwilling to admit. Socrates, of course, admits now, as you see, that virtue is teachable which he had originally denied. The Athenians don't teach virtue, or the legislators of old don't teach virtue, but these men who possess that art of measurement which has been sketched without its possibility having been established; this would be the true salvation of our lives. Well, I believe it is true that if we would choose a greater evil, future evil, and we would see with the utmost veracity the terrible consequences to which it leads--if there would be such a knowledge which we could produce in the critical moment--it would have some influence on our actions. But the question is whether such an art exists; whether one would not have to proceed in an entirely different way.

Now, here we are, I believe, at the end, not at the end of the last section of course, but there is a very important incision between the seventh and last section of the dialogue. We should stop here for a moment and reconsider the whole last section. I told you what the difficulties are. The facts which we have to explain regarding the last section are these: first, why the emphasis on the question of courage; secondly, why does Socrates try to prove the identity of wisdom and courage on the basis of the identification of the good with the pleasant; and third, why is this identification established in a fictitious dialogue between Socrates, who has Protagoras in his hip pocket at the time, and the human beings?

Now first, the first question: why the emphasis on courage? What I am going to say will repeat things which I have said before but I hope they are now more coherent and clearer. Now Protagoras asserts that surely courage is radically different from the other virtues and hence in particular from wisdom. Now why? Well, courage was the only virtue not yet discussed; hence, it is the only virtue regarding which he can hope to maintain his original thesis regarding the parts of virtue--that they are independent of each other, separable from one another. But why did not Socrates bring in courage earlier? Socrates had led up to this pair of virtues, justice and piety here and moderation and wisdom there. Now the kinship of these two couples, of each of these two pairs, is more

obvious than the kinship of courage with one of the two groups. Courage seems to be in a class by itself. Now why is this so? We must remember Protagoras' doctrine of virtue as developed in his long speech at the beginning, with the myth and around the myth. Political virtue, as he calls it there, is a virtue of human beings, now again human beings in the technical meaning and not . And that was said to consist of justice, piety and moderation. We can say, the virtue of the herd; understood in contradistinction to the virtue of the (elite) of which he did not speak there. In that long speech he was silent on courage and wisdom; courage and wisdom are these higher qualities, these distinguished qualities, and if anyone doubts that this distinction is alien to Plato he has only to read Callicles' speech in the Gorgias--the real he-man is characterized, not by these herd virtues, but by wisdom, intelligence, or whatever you call it, and courage. Well, up to the present day--we all believe that Mr. Johnson is proud of his justice, piety, and moderation but he is mighty proud of his courage and his cleverness.

Now the difficulty is, however, that Protagoras, in contradistinction to the ordinary man, is a teacher not of ordinary human beings but of potential (elite). Yet, he clearly doesn't teach courage; but he teaches only wisdom. He grafts wisdom on pre-existing courage, manliness, or whatever you call it. The pupil must come to him already possessing courage in this sense, self-assertion. And, as we know, Hippocrates possesses it; he is called by Socrates himself courageous.

Now in the discussion in the last section the chief concern is the relation between wisdom and pleasure; while the other passions were mentioned, the emphasis is definitely on pleasure. Can wisdom or knowledge be overcome by pleasure? The ability to resist the allureances of pleasure is ordinarily called moderation or temperance, not courage. Courage is rather the ability to resist fears, especially the fear of death. If we can trust old Cephalus in the beginning of the Republic, pleasure is more powerful in the young while fear of death is greater in the old. Now Protagoras is old but he does not show any sign of fear of death, even any awareness of death. He does mention death when he speaks of the many, when he speaks of capital punishment and the social conscience, in 325b3, but, otherwise he does not refer to it at all. So Protagoras in this sense is also courageous. This is reinforced by the comparison with Achilles which is occasionally suggested.

But, Protagoras is surely wise. Every Athenian would say that. He is a living proof that courage is something different from wisdom. He has wisdom and courage but the fact that Hippocrates has courage without having wisdom shows.

Now a more important consideration: "the" peculiarity of Protagoras according to his own claim is his candor, his daring, his courage. It is true he mentions in the same context

that he uses certain precautionary measures and somehow from a popular point of view a man who is very much concerned with precautionary measures is not an embodiment of courage. He has refuge to a myth which he himself has fabricated so his courage is not simply courage but in the broad sense.

Finally, and above all, his claim to teach virtue while he does not know what virtue is, as we have seen and as Socrates will tell him very soon, his nerve, to use colloquial language, is also a kind of courage.

One can say that the action of the dialogue as a whole consists in this: here is a courageous Hippocrates, here is a courageous Protagoras; Socrates tries to prevent the coming-together of these two courageous individuals.

Now Socrates is himself, of course, courageous in a different sense. And the most well-known document of that is the Phaedo, how he behaved on the day of his death. Now with whom is Socrates associated here in the dialogue?

Student: Prodicus.

No.

Student: Alcibiades.

Alcibiades, yes. So there is a kind of Socrates-Alcibiades combination in contradistinction to the Protagoras-Hippocrates combination. Alcibiades was, of course, the most courageous and daring, in the wider sense of the word, of all; and there was absolutely nothing incredible, including various acts of high treason and treachery, which he did not do. And this, I believe, is of some importance. While preventing the Protagoras-Hippocrates combination, Socrates benefits somehow from the combination Socrates-Alcibiades.

I turn now to the second and third questions which is why is wisdom equal to courage to be proven on the basis of the equation of the good and the pleasant and why is that equation established in a fictitious dialogue with the many? These two answers must be answered together. And my defective presentation was due to the fact that I did not know it before. Now after having failed to prove that courage is wisdom, in the first part of this argument, Socrates proposes that the good is identical with the pleasant, which Protagoras refuses to accept. Socrates then proposes that knowledge or wisdom is the supreme power in man and Protagoras naturally, he lives on that, accepts this. To this extent there is clearly something in common between the present-day intellectual and certain people as different as Socrates and Protagoras in Greece. Now, of course, from the point of view of the sociologist, both Socrates and Protagoras are intellectuals. Can there be the slightest doubt that this is a true statement? Well, and for

Plato this community, so to say, in vital statistics, that they are counted as intellectuals by some is very misleading. Because it all depends what kind of intellectual you are. Good.

Socrates brings up the fact that according to the many knowledge is inferior to pleasure and the other passions. Protagoras dismisses this view of the many with contempt: who cares what the many say. I suppose he does this because he sees that this view of the many contradicts his view regarding the supremacy of knowledge which he had stated immediately before on the ground that it would be especially disgraceful to him not to state it, not to state that the intellect or science is the highest. Now the many imply it, that the good is different from the pleasant. Let me try to make this clear. [goes to the board]:

<u>Socrates</u>	<u>Protagoras</u>	<u>Many</u>
supremacy of intelligence	knowledge superior	knowledge inferior
good = pleasant	?	good ≠ pleasant

This shows Protagoras as somewhat closer to the many than Socrates is. Now when Socrates proves to the many while addressing them on behalf of himself and of Protagoras that if the good is the pleasant, no, I am sorry...and what this entails regarding the status of knowledge. Now what does this mean? Let us turn to an earlier passage which I had not considered before in this connection 333b to c.

This is very shortly before the breakdown of the debate between Socrates and Protagoras and i.e. before the litigation scene. You know now what I mean by these terms because otherwise I would always have to begin from the beginning. Now can you read that? 333b8?

Student: "And now Protagoras, I said, we must finish the inquiry and not get lazy. Do you think that an unjust man can be self-controlled in justice?"

Self-controlled has also here the meaning sound, can he be prudent?, that is more the meaning here.

Student, "I should be ashamed, Socrates, he said, to acknowledge this which nevertheless many may be found to assert."

"Many of the human beings say it," go on.

Student: "And shall I argue with them or with you, I replied?"

Well, perhaps more literally, "should I argue against them or against you?" Yes.

Student: "I would rather, he said, that you should argue with the many first if you will."

Yes. You see this has a certain similarity. Protagoras describes the view that men can act sensibly by acting unjustly to the many. He ascribes the view to the many because he would be ashamed to state it on his own, although it is clearly implied in his view of the five parts of virtue, that they are separable (and if they are separable you can have prudence and lack justice.)

We see here that Protagoras lacks the courage to state this opinion as his own. And he took his position behind the apron strings, if I may say so, of the many. But this is ancient history. In the meantime he has become still more cautious; naturally, he got one beating after another. Socrates has been taming him all the time. Now in the last section of the Protagoras Socrates catches Protagoras by doing the reverse of what Protagoras did in the passage which we just read. In other words, Socrates follows Protagoras' , so, Protagoras takes the many as a shield. And Socrates says well, what you can do I also can do. Now how does he do it? That is the interesting point.

In this passage, 333, Protagoras had presented an immoral view which he tacitly shared as the view of the many. Now in the last section, Socrates presents an immoral view which Protagoras tacitly shares but openly rejects as Socrates' own view. Socrates is courageous you see: the good is the pleasant. He first leads the many to admit openly that the good is identical with the pleasant; he leads the many, that is, to Protagoras' concealed view. He then makes it easy for Protagoras to accept this view, accepted by the many, since that view leads to the most wonderful recommendation of sophistry. He thus compels Protagoras to accept openly Protagoras' concealed view by showing that its open profession leads to the most profitable consequence. Now this is, of course, what Protagoras had claimed to do in his very first speech when he said he is the first to profess to be a sophist because it doesn't pay to conceal it. And Socrates has shown in a long way which we cannot repeat now, of course, that you make a fool of yourself Protagoras.

After having made the allegedly cautious Protagoras in fact cautious, he forces him now to be truly candid. The candor is that he admits that somehow the good is the pleasant. He gives him a lesson in prudence, practical wisdom; he shows the alleged teacher of prudence that he lacks prudence. And that is of course very fatal. As if you would show a teacher of mathematics that he doesn't know what mathematics is; in fact, I believe it is even graver because a teacher of prudence is by definition a man who cannot get into these kind of fixes. This I believe is the connection. If it was a bit complicated, that is all my fault. And I believe that there might be some minor inexactnesses--of that I have no doubt--which would make it...but if I tried to avoid that altogether it would still be

more complicated than...in other words, one would have to write this up in a long presentation. But this is, I believe, a true image of what happens in this dialogue.

Student: Isn't the problem that Hippocrates might not grasp this imprudence on the part of Protagoras because it is sort of underneath?

Draw on your own experience. You hear a discussion on this campus or elsewhere the subject of which you know very little; but still in a language which you can follow--it must not be mathematical symbols which you do not know. Wouldn't you see who is licked or not--if it is a matter of victory or defeat?

Student: Well, certainly, but Socrates does come out praising sophistry in what might appear to be...

Yes, but the question is, is Protagoras, that despiser of measurement, the man to teach the true art of measurement of pleasure?

...And you can see whether this makes a proof of whether such an art of measurement exists. But the most important passage regarding our subject is a very brief one in the dialogue Statesman, 284e.

Student: "Clearly we should divide the art of measurement into two on the principle enunciated by dividing it at this point: one section will comprise all arts of measuring number, length, depth, breadth, or velocity of objects by relative standards; the other section comprises arts concerned with due occasion, due time, due performance and all such standards as have removed their abode from the extremes and are now settled about the mean."

Yes, that is enough. So, in other words, this is a statement made, not by Socrates, but still Plato asks us to listen to that stranger too. And he says that there are two arts of measure, the one is what we call mathematics. But there is another art of measurement which is transmathematical. And why? Because it is not merely concerned with relative length, meaning this is greater than that which in actual terms means this is four miles long and that is one mile long but this is still relative, but with an absolute standard. How it, a given action or whatever it might be, looks if viewed in the light of the "proper," the "right."

Now when Aristotle speaks in his Ethics of practical wisdom as the intellectual core of virtue, he speaks of virtue aiming at the right mean; mean is also a mathematical consideration

of course, whether arithmetical or geometrical doesn't make any difference. But the right mean is here not like the geometric or arithmetic mean but the right mean between too much and too little. And Aristotle refers to the fact that if we praise an action, or for that matter also a poem or another statement, the highest praise is that there is nothing too much and nothing too little. These are quantitative terms. But nevertheless these are not terms of mathematical sciences proper. And I believe this makes very much sense to say that this is what Plato thought about the subject. So, if you want, quantitative considerations enter, of course, in actions but in a way that mathematics as such is not able to solve; because there comes in a nonmathematical consideration--the right mean, the right mean.

Someone wanted to say something.

Student: Does Hippias possess both these skills?

No, no, Hippias is in a way the most ridiculous of the two--which we cannot see from this dialogue, you would have to read the two dialogues on Hippias. So, Hippias was much less pretentious than Protagoras, but, well, he was a jack of all trades. He could possess all arts, for example, he showed that every piece of clothing he had on himself was made by him. And he knew the list of Spartan kings by heart and this kind of thing. You know, a man pretending to a kind of omniscience. No, I think the highest of these three was Prodicus and this Prodicus distinction of names, while constantly ridiculed by Socrates here, is not simply rejected by him--only Prodicus seems to have overdone it. But a certain consideration of the correctness of expression is eminently useful Socrates would not deny.

Now there is one more passage which we should consider in order to understand the last section--also one of which I had not thought before. And that is very early, in 317a when Protagoras speaks of his peculiarity: the older ones, you remember, they all were sophists but they concealed it, I am the one who comes in the open. Well, he criticizes these concealers, what does he say?

Student: "for I do not believe that they affected their purpose. The powerful humans in the various cities did not fail to see through their pretenses; and as for the many, they have no understanding..."

No, "they don't notice anything so to speak." Yes, that is all we need. Now it seems to me that this principle of Protagoras is underlying his final defeat. This speech leading up to wisdom is knowledge and hence sophistry is the salvation of our lives is based on the address to the many, is based on this view--they don't notice nothing. He addresses this to the

many. That is to say, knowledge is virtue in this sense because the pleasures and so on can be measured and at the moment that you measure, the appearance doesn't have any power over you; which is very good in different things but not if you are very much attracted by the present pleasure. And what Protagoras says, Socrates applies--well, you can sell them anything. Socrates does that. He acts on this type of "cynicism" which in a much more clever way than Protagoras himself did it. Because everyone of course, even if he has no capacity to with a clever dialectician, knows that this is simply not true--that the power of the present attraction cannot be simply overcome by this kind of calculation. Again I refer to an example of Rousseau when he says, people say that they cannot restrain themselves. And so someone cannot restrain themselves from committing adultery and he enters the bedroom of this beloved at night. And Rousseau says let us make this simple experiment: erect gallows beneath this window and make it clear to him that as soon as he has enjoyed himself, he will be hanged. Then he can control himself. Now this is, of course, no longer an art of measurement but counteracting one sense of impressions, one image, by another image, and one feeling, or passion, by another passion. Good.

But we should go on now and read a bit more because we have reached a very high point, we cannot deny that, but we have heard now Socrates making propaganda for sophistry, and a very clever one. Good.

Student: "--Let us suppose this to be our answer to the many humans...

"To the many," that is clear now. This is what Socrates says to the many or what we, the intellectuals, say to the many. Yes.

Student: "And now I should like to ask you, Hippias, and you, Prodicus, as well as Protagoras (for the argument is to be yours as well as ours), whether you think that I am speaking the truth or not?

They all thought that what I said was entirely true."

Yes, "was exceedingly true," "marvelously true." Now here incidentally we have a common deliberation with the others which Socrates quasi-promised to Hippocrates in 314b. Now they agree, of course, with enthusiasm. Did you ever hear of a producer of Colgate toothpaste protest against a clever advertisement for it, for that same toothpaste? Good. Yes, go on.

Student: "Then you agree, I said, that the pleasant is the good, and the painful evil. And here I would beg my friend Prodicus...

"Friend" occurs very rarely.

Student: "And I would beg Prodicus here not to introduce his distinction of names, whether he is disposed to say pleasurable, delightful, joyful. However, by whatever name he prefers to call them, I will ask you, most excellent Prodicus, to answer in my sense of the words.

Prodicus laughed and assented, as did the others."

Now Prodicus agrees here although he knows better; you would only have to look up 337c in order to see that Prodicus makes a very sensible distinction between two kinds of pleasure and expressing it by different terms. Now he, of course, laughs as you see. There is not much laughing going on in this dialogue as you must have observed. He laughs not only about Socrates teasing him but because he somehow sees that the big joke which Socrates has somehow practiced. And Prodicus enjoys jokes. So does Socrates. But there is one great difference between Socrates' enjoying jokes and Prodicus'--a very obvious one. Socrates doesn't laugh. You have to imagine him with a poker face all the time. He laughed only on his dying day according to both Plato and Xenophon. And the story in Xenophon is particularly exhilarating because he had a particularly sentimental adherent, and in his way quite charming, Apollodorus, who was completely out of his mind when he heard that Socrates was going to die. And he says, how terrible Socrates that you are unjustly compelled to do it. And then Socrates said laughingly would you prefer that I would be justly condemned? That is a rare occasion for joking.

Now you see here all accept the equation of the good and the pleasant, even Protagoras does--no doubt about it any more because if a conclusion...how did Hobbes put it so beautifully?

Student: "if so oft reason is against a man, so oft will a man be against reason."

Yes, but "so oft unreason is for a man, so oft will a man be for unreason." Yes, that is quite true. Now?

Student: "Then, what do you say to this?"

He says, . That term didn't occur; for the first time Socrates is no longer speaking to the many, mere humans, but to , old-standing men. And if wisdom is in the highest, then the men of wisdom will be the , that is elementary. Yes.

Student: "Then gentlemen what do you say to this? Are not all actions noble, of which the tendency is to make life painless and pleasant? The noble work is also useful and good?

This was admitted."

Yes, now wait. Well, all right read on.

Student: "Then I said, if the pleasant is the good, nobody does anything under the idea or conviction that some other thing would be better and is also attainable, when he might do the better. And this inferiority of a man to himself is merely ignorance, as the superiority of a man to himself is wisdom.
They all assented."

Yes. Now you see here in Greek that he says first it seems so, here it is said it seemed so to all, and in the sequel if you would look up c6, d4, and 359a1, all agree. In this single case in d6 the all is not added, there must be someone holding out. Now let us see what this can possibly mean. Now what he says there is actions leading to pleasure are identical with noble actions, a very tall order! I mean if someone devises pleasure from something absolutely abominable how many men in their right senses would call action leading to that pleasure a noble or praiseworthy action? Of course not. And some man here holds out against it. I bet that Protagoras holds out because he was the one who said only those who derive pleasure from noble things are truly pleasure (351c.)

Now the argument here is simply this: action leading to pleasure, no, sorry, the good is the pleasant, actions leading to pleasure i.e. to the good are of course useful because that is what we mean by useful, something good, but they are also noble, praiseworthy; for the noble action is useful as well as good, namely pleasant. One can only say, what a non sequitur. Only apply it to a case of a bank robbery. They rob the bank in order to get, to have an enjoyable period in Miami Beach or Hawaii or whatever. Now pleasure is a good so the bank robbery is useful to that--they properly did it and they will not be caught and that is good. But is it praiseworthy? I think no one would say that. Even they themselves wouldn't dare to praise it which is a clear sign that it is not praiseworthy. Yes. Good.

Now in the next point they all agree so there is no question of the praiseworthy involved and therefore there is no difficulty. Yes.

Student: "And is not ignorance the having a false opinion and being deceived about important matters?"

To this also they unanimously assented.

Then, I said, no man voluntarily pursues evil, or that which he thinks to be evil. To pursue what one believes to be evil rather than what is good is not in human nature; and when a man is compelled to choose one of two evils, no one will choose the greater when he may have the less.

All of them agreed to every word of this."

"All of us agreed." So that in the former cases when he said this was acceptable to all, we do not know if Socrates agreed, but, here, all of us. That means Socrates and Protagoras are included. Yes, go on.

Student: "Well, I said, there is a certain thing called fear or terror; and here, Prodicus, I should particularly like to know whether you would agree with me in defining this fear or terror as expectation of evil.

Protagoras and Hippias agreed, but Prodicus said that this was fear and not terror."

Well, just as the distinction made now between fear and anguish on the basis of as two different things; the principle of the distinction is of course different but it is easily intelligible that man makes the distinction between two kinds of expectations of evil.

Student: "Never mind, Prodicus, I said; but let me ask whether, if our former assertions are true, a man will pursue that which he fears when it is open to him to pursue what he does not fear? Would not this be in flat contradiction to the admission which has been already made, that he thinks the things which he fears to be evil; and no one will pursue or voluntarily accept that which he thinks to be evil?

That also was universally admitted."

Yes, but he doesn't include himself now. No one goes toward things, here the ambiguity depends entirely on something which I cannot render in English which in Greek is the preposition epi. It has a twofold meaning relevant here. I will bring it out not by translating: no one goes epi things which he knows or believes to be bad but what one feels or one believes to be bad; no one goes epi the terrible or dangerous things. Now the joke is this that epi may mean both after and toward. No one of course goes after the bad things, in the sense of striving for them but quite a few people face them--that is something very different. And this difference is obscured by the use of this particular proposition. It means after or toward. No one goes after dangerous things, well a few people accept it, but a few people go toward them for one reason or another, face them. Well, if we take the conclusion literally we would have to say voluntary courage is impossible, voluntary courage. And whether we can call involuntary courage, courage is a question. It is not clear, as I pointed out, whether Socrates accepts this or not. Let us read a few more lines.

Student: "Then, I said, these, Hippias and Prodicus, are our premises; and I would beg Protagoras to explain to us...

That is too weak, "to apologize."

Student: "to apologize to us how he can be right in what he said at first."

Let us stop here. Socrates calls here Protagoras before a tribunal. You see Protagoras had this terrific triumph, if it was a triumph. Socrates has made the best Madison Avenue statement ever made in favor of sophistry. And now comes the anti-climax. Now he is called before a tribunal consisting of Socrates, Prodicus, and Hippias; and Prodicus and Hippias are his competitors. It is not a pleasant prospect. Good. Yes.

Student: "I do not mean in what he said quite at first, for his first statement, as you may remember, was that whereas there were five parts of virtue none of them was like any other of them; each of them had a separate power. To this, however, I am not referring, but to the assertion which he afterwards made that of the five virtues four were nearly akin to each other, but that the fifth, which was courage, differed greatly from the others."

No, the "one," he doesn't say the "fifth." "That that one differed very greatly from the others, namely courage." Yes.

Student: "And of this he gave me the following proof. He said: You will find, Socrates, that some of the most impious,..."

No, "and he said I would find, realize it, by using the following proof."

Student: "You will find, Socrates, that some of the most impious, and unrighteous, and self-indulgent, and ignorant of men are among the most courageous;..."

No, no, "will find human beings who are most impious and unjust and incontinent and ignorant, yet, most courageous; and through this you will realize that courage differs greatly from the other parts of virtue." Now let us stop here for I think we cannot go beyond that.

Now you see Socrates when he says here what you said first, I don't mean what you said right at the beginning but only at the beginning of this section. Which is not very nice of Socrates because he rubs it in that Protagoras has shifted his position. That is not nice. But on the other hand he acts now as a judge; he tells him you will be held responsible only for what you did last, i.e. for what you did after deliberation, also a judicial principle. Now here is again another repetition and a thorough comparison of b2 to 6 with

349d5 to 3 and this would be a good exercise in learning how to read Plato. The changes are much greater than they were in the case of when Socrates quoted what the human beings say for the reason indicated.

Let me see, I mention only a few points. The position of impiety and injustice is changed i.e. impiety and injustice are presented as interchangeable. Well, I believe that we simply will stop now.

We will have a meeting next time in which I hope we will finish the Protagoras and, if it is all right with you, and if I can physically make it, I would say that we should meet next Monday for a kind of free for all; less for the aesthetic purpose of having any fireworks than for the very pedestrian purpose of enabling you to write a better exam question. And this paper would have to be written on a week from Wednesday.

Plato's Protagoras. A Course given by Professor Leo Strauss in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 16, May 19, 1965

Let us turn to our passage in 359c6. But a few words before we begin to read.

Socrates asserts that the good is the pleasant, which is not granted by Protagoras; and to begin with, not even by the humans. But he forces the humans to grant it and on this basis shows that the salvation of life consists in becoming a pupil of the Sophists, if not of the Protagorean brand as we have seen. Protagoras himself believes in his heart of hearts that the good is the pleasant, in other words, that the noble and just is only conventional. We know this from the sister dialogue Theaetetus where the dead Protagoras is resuscitated by Socrates. And since he is dead and no longer runs any risks, he can say it. Now this passage in the Theaetetus is discussed very ably in the book of Jacob Klein which just came out, A Commentary on Plato's Meno, North Carolina Press. I regard this as a very outstanding book, not only as a highpoint in Platonic studies but as a watershed. Klein presents there the section of the Protagoras in question, unfortunately I forgot the book; that Socrates imitates Protagoras and this imitation of Protagoras presents a self refutation of Protagoras and therewith, since Protagoras' thesis is that knowledge is sense perception, a self refutation of sense perception. Incidentally sense perception and pleasure belong together. I mean knowledge as sense perception is a parallel to the good is the pleasant, the sensibly perceived. Now in the Protagoras the living Protagoras ascribes his view to the humans and he does this from fear. Socrates therefore brings the humans over to Socrates' view, which is in fact Protagoras' concealed view. And thus he induces Protagoras to confess his view, namely, by showing the excellent consequences for Protagoras, sophistry is a necessity. By ascribing what he presents as his view to the humans Socrates in a way imitates Protagoras. I believe that this point is common to the Theaetetus scene and to the Protagoras here.

Now we had begun last time to read this section. Socrates turns then, after having brought over the many to his side and after having proved to the many that they can do nothing, spend their money in no better way than by sending their children to the Sophists, he turns then to the Sophists, whom he counts not humans but (old gentlemen.) They are the elite. From what preceded it follows that no one goes toward the dangerous things because the dangerous things are the bad things of course. And the question arises can there be courageous men if there is not a single man who faces up to or goes after the dangerous things?

Socrates calls Protagoras before the tribunal consisting of himself and the two other Sophists. He reminds Protagoras of what Protagoras had eventually asserted, namely, that wisdom is different from courage. This was the place where we

stopped last time. And now we go to 359b6. We had just read the literal quotation, or almost literal quotation of Protagoras' statement by Socrates.

Student: "I was surprised at his saying this at the time, and I am still more surprised now..."

No wait a minute. "I was greatly surprised when I heard this reply." Now at that time Socrates, of course, did not indicate in any way that he was surprised. He is now much more outspoken to Protagoras because the situation is greatly different. At that time amazement wouldn't have helped.

Student: "and I am still more surprised now that I have discussed the matter with you."

You in the plural, i.e. not only Protagoras but the others too.

Student: "So I asked him whether by the brave he meant the confident. Yes, he replied, and the aggressive. (Do you remember, Protagoras, making this answer?) He assented."

You see here is again a cross-examination. The Greek word for that is elenchos, and the procedure of Socrates is generally called elenchos. But originally, of course, this is judicial cross-examination which may include torture. And here we now have a kind of judicial cross-examination because Protagoras was called before the tribunal. This is also again a quotation, a correct quotation, with minor changes. Socrates omits now that the many go toward what the many fear. In other words he omits now the difference between the courageous and the cowards. What this means will become clear soon.

Student: "Well, then, I said, tell us against what are the brave ready to go--against the same things as the cowards? No, he answered."

You see Socrates proceeds step-by-step, the impression of utmost exactness and in the judicial procedure the utmost fairness or legality. Yes.

Student: "Then against something different? Yes, he said."

You see the exactness. They do not go, the courageous do not go toward the same dangers toward which the cowards go. No, then they go toward something different. There may be something deeper behind it but on the surface it is of course a hundred

percent . Yes.

Student: "Then do cowards go where there is nothing to fear,
and the brave where there is much to fear?
Yes, Socrates, so people say."

Yes, again the humans. "So, at least, the humans say." He
tries again to take cover behind the humans as he has done
before. Yes.

Student: "Very true, I said. But I want to know against what
do you say the brave are ready to go--against fearful
things, believing them to be fearful things, or against
things which are not fearful?"

You see Socrates no longer permits Protagoras to take
this cover. Protagoras you are the defendant here for our
tribunal, not the many. Yes.

Student: "No, said he; the former case has been proved by
you in the previous argument to be impossible."

He refers here to 358e where it was said that no one would
wish to go, or is willing to go, toward the things which he
fears i.e. which he regards as evil. Now it is said that the
courageous do not go toward the fear-inspiring things. The
courageous do not go toward the fear-inspiring things even,
he omits here willing, which means that the courageous do not
go toward the fear-inspiring things even under compulsion; for
clearly if they did it under compulsion, the so-called fearful
things, the enemy, would be less fear-inspiring and hence
would be relatively good compared with the M.P. with his gun
behind him in the back. The cowards go toward the fear-inspiring
things, if they do, only under compulsion and therefore it is
relatively good. That I hope is clear. Yes.

Student: "That, again, I replied, is quite true. And if this has
been proved rightly, then no one goes to meet what
he thinks fearful, since inferiority to oneself has
been shown to be ignorance.
He assented"

Now that is very strange isn't it? Are there no ignorant
people? For if there are ignorant people why are there not
cowards in particular? Socrates seems to identify many in
general with the wise. On what grounds? Do you see the strangeness
of this passage? His reasoning here implies that there are no
ignorant people. No one goes toward the terrible thing because
to do so would be ignorance. Yes.

Student: Well, isn't he saying, no one goes to the terrible
things knowing that they are terrible?

Yes, but it is not here stated. It is not here repeated. Here he said it unqualifiedly.

Student: Well, then, when Protagoras said in the former case it was impossible, the former case is going to the terrible things knowing they are terrible.

Yes, still I think we have to take this sentence by itself also. Precisely because Socrates is so exact, as we have seen before, so pedantic. We have to take his sentence literally. Yes.

Student: Then, "no one goes to meet what he regards as dreadful," is a mistranslation?

No, no, that is correct.

Student: Well then it would seem...

But this is said here without any qualification. "No one goes toward the fear-inspiring things" is unqualifiedly said--not qualified by knowledge or ignorance nor by voluntary or involuntary. But I think it will be explained in the sequel.

Student: "And yet the brave man and the coward alike go to meet that about which they are confident;..."

More literally, "but all go toward the confidence-inspiring things, both cowards and courageous men." Yes.

Student: "so that, in this point of view, the cowardly and the brave go to meet the same things."

So, in other words, the cowards and the brave or the ignorant and the wise have the same end, i.e. they agree in the most important respect. Well, to take the simple formula, they all want to be happy. Striving toward the good is common to all men and hence presupposed by all teaching. This striving, which is presupposed by all teaching, is itself not an object of teaching, is not teachable. We will come back to that later. The obvious difficulty is now raised by Protagoras.

Student: "And yet, Socrates, said Protagoras, that against which the coward goes is the opposite of that against which the brave goes; the one, for example, is willing to go to battle, and the other is not willing."

Yes, now Protagoras makes here a common sense statement against Socrates' absurd assertion. Granted that all men strive for the good, but there is such a great variety of the good things that this overall statement is not very helpful.

This variety of the good things, does this ring a bell as they say? Variety of the goods?

Student: Hobbes had something of that...

No, no, here.

Student: The beginning of Aristotle's Ethics.

No, no, no, here much closer to home.

Student: The variety of virtues.

No. Well, the big interruption in the Protagoras, where Protagoras came up with the variety of the good against Socrates. You remember that? Some things are good for human beings, other things are good for oxen, and so on and so on and so on. This is somehow Protagoras' strong point, it is not negligible of course. The courageous are willing to go to war and the cowards are not. He inverts here the order of the courageous and the cowards, a kind of a reminder that they are interchangeable because of the identity of the ultimate end. They both want the good although they disagree as to what the good is. Now go on.

Student: "And is going to battle noble or disgraceful? I said. Noble, he replied."

Yes, it is more subtle, "regarding going to battle as noble or as base?"

Student: "And if noble, then already admitted by us to be good; for all noble actions we have admitted to be good."

Yes, now the courageous go to war because they regard doing it as noble, and hence as good and hence as in no way fear-inspiring. And the base regard going to war as bad because they regard it as unpleasant, fear-inspiring, bad, base. On the basis of this beautiful equation the noble equal to the good equal to the pleasant. How does Protagoras react to that?

Student: "That is true; and to that opinion I shall always adhere."

He agrees emphatically to the equation of the noble and the good and hence also of the pleasant. This we can say is Protagoras' line in this kind of argument where he has to speak with a certain kind of responsibility because he wants to angle pupils from self-respecting families. Yes.

Student: "Rightly so, I said. But which of the two are they who, as you say, are unwilling to go to war, which is a good and noble thing?

The cowards, he replied.

And what is good and noble, I said, is also pleasant?

It has certainly been acknowledged to be so, he replied."

Yes, "it certainly has been agreed upon," is the more literal translation. So, and he doesn't go back behind that agreement. Yes.

Student: "And do the cowards knowingly refuse to go to the nobler, and pleasanter, and better?

The admission of that, he replied, would belie our former admissions."

Now let us stop here for one moment. The cowards do not wish to go to war although going to war is noble, good, and hence pleasant. They don't know anything of it which is fun! They are completely crazy people! They do not know that it is pleasant and noble. This is the reason why they fear going to war. That is a clear error and errors can be corrected by teaching. That is clear. Yes.

Student: "But does not the brave man also go to meet the better, and pleasanter, and nobler?

That must be admitted.

And the brave man has no base fear or base confidence?

True, he replied.

And if not base, then noble?

He admitted this.

And if noble, then good?

Yes.

But the fear and confidence of the coward or fool-hardy or madman, on the contrary, are base?

He assented."

Now let us stop here. So, we see here in passing that courage doesn't mean absence of fear but means the presence of the right fear. In the first book of the Laws the distinction is made between fear and sense of shame as a noble fear. The courageous have only noble fear and noble confidence; that is to say, according to the identifications made, pleasant fear and pleasant confidence while the cowards and the rash have only base fears and base confidence, i.e. unpleasant fears and unpleasant confidences. Of course we can raise the question can confidence ever be unpleasant? That is one of the difficulties. But why does he bring in now the rash and the madmen? The rash surely are also eager to go to war, regard war as noble, and hence as good, and hence as pleasant. But we have not only to

consider the one opposite, the cowards, but we have to consider the other, the foolishly bold. But what is the difference between the courageous and the foolishly bold?

Student: The courageous win their wars, the rash don't.

No, I wish that were as simply true as that. I believe that it is more simple to consider the following: the rash are eager to go into any war however foolish and unjust whereas the courageous are confident only in regard to reasonable and just wars. And that would mean that courage is inseparable from wisdom and justice. But even the overbold have fears, even they have fears, every man has fears. But what do the overbold fear? Think of a bully of the meanest kind, does he also have fears?

Student: Fear of disgrace.

Yes, to appear as a non-bully he fears. Sure, that is true. Now let us go on.

Student: "And these base and evil fears and confidences originate in ignorance and lack of learning?
True, he said."

So, that is clear. That is what is implied in everything before. And in the case of bold, courageous, and cowards, the reason for their conduct is ignorance (the overbold and cowards.) The cowards do not know the nobility of death in a just cause, the overbold do not know the baseness of death in an unjust cause.

Student: "Then as to that because of which cowards are cowards do you call it cowardice or courage?

I should say cowardice, he replied.

And have they not been shown to be cowards through their ignorance of dangers?

Assuredly, he said.

And because of that ignorance they are cowards?

He assented.

And the reason why they are cowards is admitted by you to be cowardice?

He again assented.

Then the ignorance of what is and is not fearful is cowardice?

He nodded assent."

Now the argument is very simple: that because of which men are cowards is cowardice; that because of which men are cowards proves to be ignorance. Hence cowardice is identical with ignorance of the fear-inspiring things. And therefore the

opposite, courage, will be knowledge. Yes?

Student: This seems to depend on what we talked about before that each has only one opposite and therefore if there are two opposites to the same thing they have to be the same. And I wonder if the assertion of the overbold was meant to remind that there can be two opposites?

But how would it affect this argument? What makes an overbold man overbold? Overboldness. But it also is ignorance of the things which are truly fear- or confidence-inspiring.

Student: Well, but, perhaps in this case the opposites, in terms of ignorance and cowardice needn't be the same because one could be brave through proper training or something or brave through knowledge. And knowledge and bravery needn't be the same thing. In other words ignorance-cowardice would have two different opposites i.e. two different reasons for being brave, one because of some sort of training and the other because of knowledge.

This is here completely disregarded as you must have seen, the case of the diver or any expert, say a telephone worker which is quite dangerous. This case of courage is here disregarded.

Student: I meant more a type of courage which is due not to the knowledge of the dangers but simply because of a certain sort of a training.

Yes, this is surely not taken into consideration in this discussion. This was only used on a former occasion, as you know, and only in a preparatory manner. In this case it was knowledge of diving and the things belonging to diving. Now it is a different kind of knowledge, knowledge of fear-inspiring things as such. The man trained in diving would be courageous in diving but he would not be courageous in other matters where he has no expert knowledge. He is much broader here. Yes?

Student: Couldn't that be raised as an objection to Plato's argument for sophistry that first of all men are born with capabilities...

Yes, well, this is here in a way abstracted but not entirely. We have seen that we are compelled to consider the fact that Protagoras only wants pupils who are naturally courageous. In addition, there is another reason. Granting that courage is knowledge and it can be acquired by teaching, that doesn't mean that all men can become it, can become courageous because not all men can learn. There is nothing

contradictory between them.

Student: Isn't it also possible that man can learn full well what he should do, how he should go to war, and no matter how rationally and logically he knows what he should do, something down below, something in his guts makes his feet go the other way.

Yes, that is a famous difficulty. Socrates' thesis seems to run counter to this common sense observation. That cannot be, if he knows. I mean the fact that someone opines that it is noble to do it and he doesn't do it, overcome by pleasure or fear that he admits. But the opinion is not knowledge. So it is that in the case of the man of knowledge, this cannot happen. We will come back to that later.

Student: But then the Simonides section is in contradiction.

Yes. But we must first follow this argument from where we left off. So, we know this now that cowardice is identical with ignorance of what is fear-inspiring.

Student: "But surely courage, I said is opposed to cowardice? Yes.

Then the wisdom which knows what are and are not fearful things is opposed to the ignorance of them?

To that again he nodded assent.

And the ignorance of them is cowardice?

To that he very reluctantly nodded assent.

And the knowledge of that which is and is not fearful is courage, and is opposed to the ignorance of these things?

At this point he would no longer nod assent, but was silent.

And why, I said, do you neither assent nor dissent, Protagoras?

Finish the argument by yourself, he said."

So, the argument is very simple: cowardice is the opposite of courage, and the opposite of ignorance is knowledge, hence courage is wisdom regarding the fearful things. Implied here is, of course, one thing which is not made explicit: courage is not identical with wisdom simply but wisdom regarding very specific objects, fear-inspiring things. Therefore courage is a part of wisdom, as a part of wisdom is a part of virtue, hence virtue has qualitatively different parts, as Protagoras said originally but what difference?

Student: Well, it can't be like parts of the face because the nose is not the face.

Yes, but one other thing I believe is more important at the moment: that the parts are not separable. Virtue has qualitatively different parts, in other words temperance differs from courage, but they are inseparable. This, by the way, is this thesis of Aristotle's Ethics, this very common sensical work compared with Plato, too--the parts of virtue are inseparable, they are qualitatively different but inseparable--that is here too.

Student: When you say that virtue has qualitatively different parts do you mean to refer as well to the fact that since courage is only a part of wisdom that some encompass more than others? If courage is only a part of wisdom...

No, not necessarily. Wisdom branches out into various parts. Whether there should be a wisdom simply, different from the wisdom regarding pleasant and unpleasant things i.e. temperance, or wisdom regarding future evils i.e. courage, is a long question. The dialogue doesn't go up so far.

Student: It seems that there are two alternatives. Either wisdom on the one hand is the superior part of virtue or on the other hand there is no such thing as virtue, there are only these other four virtues.

Prior to investigation we cannot answer that. Yes.

Student: If they are inseparable, that means that a drunk can't be courageous.

Well, a habitual drunkard. I mean a drunk man may be a momentary lapse. It may not even be a lapse, it may be voluntarily induced on festive occasions.

Student: No, I mean a hard and heavy drinker.

Yes, surely, his intemperance cannot be courageous. That is implied.

Student: Well, I don't know very much about our civil war but there is always a rumor in the lockerroom about how Grant...

Yes, but, still a man who drinks very much is not for this reason alone intemperate. He may just drink what he can digest. Aristotle discusses that, what is moderate food for a boxer may be much too much for a professor. There is an infinite variety of so-called virtues. I mean what we ordinarily call a temperate man doesn't have to be truly. For example, if he abstains from unhealthy food. He may just be a calculating and he may not be a virtuous man. Let us first finish this

argument.

Student: "I only want to ask one more question, I said. I want to know whether you still think that there are some humans who are most ignorant and yet most courageous? It is contemptuous of you Socrates to make me answer, very well then, I will gratify you, and say, that this appears to me to be impossible consistently with the argument."

No, no, "on the basis of the things agreed upon." I mean "on the basis of what was agreed upon, it cannot be." But whether they have wisely agreed upon is another matter of course.

Originally Protagoras had said that there are many men who are extremely courageous and extremely stupid or ignorant or extremely unjust and so on. And then many humans was replaced by humans and finally only by some humans, that would be an exceptional case anyway. In fact, it follows that not a single human being is both very foolish and very brave. That is clear.

Now ~~his~~ defeat of Protagoras which we have witnessed--he became forevermore silent--surpasses all his earlier defeats. In the first debate, when the four virtues were discussed, there was no clear refutation of his thesis. He was licked in the discussion regarding Simonides but the relevance of the Simonides section was dismissed by Socrates himself--you know, one cannot find out what poets mean. Here, the refutation is inescapable for Protagoras because its major premise, so to speak, is the goodness of sophistry. I mean he cannot object to that. Provided sophistry is good, men can be made good by teaching, as he claims. Then virtue must be teachable and then the virtues must be knowledges. Socrates has conquered the last hold-out of Protagoras. The result: one must be wise in order to be brave. This is also a condemnation of poor Hippocrates because he isn't wise. He himself doesn't say that.

Protagoras is unable to defend himself as we have seen. He will be condemned by the court which consists of his superiors. We have a clear case here of the rule of the best. But the three-man court only disguises the rule of a single man, the king. Who is that?

Student: Socrates.

Socrates. So, we have here a beautiful example of what the rule of the philosopher king means. We observe an amazing progress from the litigation scene, where Socrates still had to fight for his right to equality with Protagoras, to the final scene, in which he rules supreme. And now, an anti-climax. The victor, the king, disqualifies himself, i.e. he admits that he is unfit to be a king because he lacks the required

knowledge. This is what happens in the sequel to which we must now turn.

Student: "My only object, I said, in continuing with my questions has been the desire to ascertain facts about virtue and what virtue itself is."

Yes. Now that is the standard formula. "What then it is, virtue." Protagoras then had just accused Socrates of the desire to win a victory. Socrates says that his only desire is to find out what virtue is. This was the question implicitly raised in the form of the question, in what sense are the virtues part of virtue. But this is, of course, not identical with the question of what virtue is. The question of what virtue is was not explicitly raised in this dialogue. Why? Because in the conversation with Protagoras, the desire to find out what virtue is was, to say the least, not Socrates' only desire. Because if it had been his only desire, he would have raised it. What was his desire in that discussion--it was not to win a victory, it was not to find out what virtue is, but what?

Student: To cure Hippocrates of an unhealthy appetite.

Exactly. Very good. That is clear. So, we must never forget that. Nevertheless, in spite of this eminently practical purpose of the discussion, the gravest theoretical and universal questions were implied. And this is, perhaps, the healthiest forum in which to raise the universal questions. Now?

Student: "for if this were clear..."

"If this had become clear."

Student: "for if this had become clear, I am very sure that the other controversy which has been carried on at great length by both of us--you affirming and I denying that virtue can be taught--would also become clear."

Yes, in other words, they discuss whether virtue is teachable without knowing what virtue is; they are completely in the dark. There is a very clear and striking parallel to that at the end of the first book of the Republic where Socrates has proved that justice is good without having raised the question what justice is. How can you say that justice is good if you do not know what justice is? Same here; how can you know that virtue is teachable if you do not know what virtue is. Yes.

Student: "The result of our discussion appears to me to be singular. For if the argument had a human voice, that voice would be heard laughing at us and charging us: Socrates and Protagoras..."

Now let us stop here for a moment. With slight exaggeration we might say that the logos, the discussion, the argument, is here personified i.e. anthropomorphized. The logos is, in a sense, a living being; it has, in a way, a life of its own. We all know that--that an argument has a life of its own--whether we like it or not it goes on. But nevertheless it is not strictly speaking a living being, a logos cannot talk, it has no voice. Socrates shows by deed in the sequel how little eager he was to win. He acknowledges spontaneously, generously, that he too is defeated. And that is what the logos, or quasi-logos, says.

Student: "you are strange beings; there are you, Socrates, who were saying earlier that virtue cannot be taught, contradicting yourself now by your attempt to prove that all things are knowledge, including justice, and moderation, and courage,--which tends to show that virtue can certainly be taught; for if virtue were other than knowledge, as Protagoras attempted to prove, then clearly virtue cannot be taught; but if virtue is entirely knowledge, as you are seeking to show, Socrates, then I cannot but suppose that virtue is capable of being taught."

Now what is the self-contradiction of Socrates which Socrates himself points out, no one else did? Socrates says, on the one hand, that virtue is knowledge and, on the other, virtue is not teachable. Now he had said that it is not teachable. Protagoras had said that it is teachable; but, Protagoras did not know what virtue is. Eventually Socrates did show that virtue is teachable if the good is identical with the pleasant. By denying still, at the end, that virtue is teachable, he denies in effect the equation with which he started, namely of the good and the pleasant. Or, at any rate, he denies that there is an art of measuring the pleasures or pains, an art which is identical with virtue. If such a measuring art, which is identical with virtue, existed, Socrates could not still maintain that virtue is not teachable. When he mentions the various virtues here--justice, moderation, and courage--he omits one of the virtues originally mentioned which is what?

Student: Piety.

Piety. Why? Well, the status of piety is particularly complicated. The answer could not be given except by studying the , the subject of which is piety. Yes, now he turns to Protagoras' self-contradiction.

Student: "Protagoras, on the other hand, who began by prophesying that it could be taught, is now eager to prove it to be anything rather than knowledge; and if this is true, it must be quite incapable of being taught."

Socrates takes it for granted--by this whole statement which he attributes to the logos--that the argument, the discussion, the dialogue did not bring about the slightest change in Protagoras. Protagoras still believes what he did in the beginning. Just as it did not bring about the slightest change in Socrates. They take exactly the same stance now as they did at the beginning. I mean, if the purpose was that Socrates should learn something or that Protagoras should learn something, the dialogue is a complete failure. But we know that the primary purpose of the dialogue was neither but was to have an effect on Hippocrates. Yes.

Student: "Now I, Protagoras, perceiving this terrible confusion have a great desire that it should be cleared up. And I should like to carry on the discussion until we finally ascertain what virtue is,..."

Yes, this is a famous question--"what is"--the Socratic question fully developed means to find out the essential character of virtue, the idea of virtue. Yes.

Student: "And to investigate whether it is capable of being taught or not,..."

Yes. The practical conclusion then is this: we must now face "the" question, what is virtue itself. After this question has been answered, then we shall turn to the question whether it is teachable. Yes.

Student: "lest haply Epimetheus should trip us up and deceive us in the argument, as he forgot us in the myth;..."

Now wait here for one moment. Otherwise, if we do not raise the question what is virtue first, we shall act like Epimetheus in the myth; which means that we shall act thoughtlessly. Epimetheus forgot the human beings and distributed all the powers among the irrational animals. We shall act thoughtlessly, we shall not consider in the first place what is most important; for the most important question is what virtue is, not whether it is teachable. But we can, of course, raise this question. Does not Socrates know that virtue is knowledge? What about that? We leave this open for the time being. Yes.

Student: "even as you were telling the myth, I prefer your Prometheus to your Epimetheus, for of him I make constant use, whenever I am busy about these questions, in Promethean care of my own life in its entirety. And if you have no objection, as I said at first, I should like to have your help in the enquiry."

Yes. Now Socrates will imitate Prometheus, the man of forethought who will consider the most important things first; thinking ahead with a view to his whole life. He does not believe apparently that Protagoras will do that. And needless to say there is complete silence as to Hippocrates, that almost goes without saying. Yes, now the true dialogue will begin and let us see what happens next.

Student: "Protagoras replied: Socrates, I am not of a base nature, and I am the last human in the world to be envious..."

He omits something. "I praise your zeal and the way in which you argue."

Student: That is the next sentence.

I see. He evidently has a better sense of what comes first.

Student: "I cannot but applaud your energy and your conduct of an argument."

Energy, you know, that comes from an entirely different word. Zeal would be a simpler translation. That comes from modern physics. Indirectly that comes from Aristotle.

Student: "As I have often said, I admire you above all the men whom I meet, and far above all men of your age; and I dare say that I would not be surprised if you were to become one of those who are distinguished for their wisdom. Let us come back to the subject at some future time of your choosing; at present we had better turn to something else."

Well, I think that we can summarize this by saying that Protagoras surely had enough for today. So we won't find out what virtue is here.

Student: "By all means, I said, if that is your wish; for I too ought long since to have kept the engagement of which I spoke before, and only tarried because I could not refuse the request of the noble Callias."

Yes, well, "noble" or "beautiful" that is the same. But in order to oblige Callias. So Socrates politely agrees. He, too, is busy. Now how busy Socrates is, we know--from the beginning of the dialogue. He spends five or six hours in retelling this story. And, of course, Socrates did not stay in order to gratify Callias. So, I hate to say that, but he ends with two lies. And the last sentence?

Student: "So the conversation ended, and we went our way."

Literally, "having said and heard this, we left." So, obviously Socrates leaves with Hippocrates. But with one difference, Hippocrates is busy--there may be another run-away slave. And they separate. At the beginning of the dialogue, as we have seen, there is no Hippocrates there. How can we prove that Hippocrates wasn't there at the beginning?

Student: Well, the companion speaks to him in the singular.

Yes, but still there could be a young boy there and you know how people are very impolite to young people. Well, he could not have told the entire story in the presence of Hippocrates. That is clear. So, the end is not difficult to understand.

Now there is one general point which I would like to bring up to date; a great difficulty here. Socrates asserts, as we have seen and as we have heard from his own mouth, virtue is knowledge. Well, no assertion of Socrates is more plain than that. But this is a riddle; not what we understand by an answer. But here he says also, it is not teachable. Now this comes up in a very clear way in the Meno, in 82a...

...not teachable, what is it? And the answer is recollection. This is also a riddle but perhaps at least it points to the right direction. I will say a few words about that.

Now knowledge and wisdom are used here synonymously. Socrates, of course, does not mean the knowledge which a shoemaker has, or a physician has, or which a mathematician has, this is not the knowledge he has in mind. Of course we know that these partial knowledges go well together with all kinds of vices. I think we can say that without any hesitation. So, knowledge is wisdom. Why is it not teachable? Again, the most general answer is given by Socrates. No man is wise; only God is wise. Even here in the Protagoras in the Simonides poem discussions this comes up. Now since no one possesses the knowledge required, no one can transmit it, no one can teach it. Now what is the consequence of that, that no one possesses this only knowledge that deserves our respect? what follows from that?

Student: No one is virtuous.

Simply virtuous. Yes, but before we come to that--no one can be simply virtuous, that is correct. And that is indicated, I advise you to read the last sentence of the Phaedo, as Socrates says the best... And what follows is that one must strive for wisdom. Now striving for wisdom expressed in Greek means philosophy, striving to be wise, philosophize. Now if

this is so, if the highest of which man is capable is philosophizing, striving for wisdom, can this striving be taught? How can one teach striving, how can one arouse a desire? Think! Surely by speeches, among other things. I mean there would not be this enormous activity on Madison Avenue if one couldn't arouse desires by speeches. But is arousing a desire teaching? In the case of Madison Avenue everyone would admit that this is not teaching but even on the highest case. Our primary state, the state in which most of us are most of the time, in which most of us are all of the time, is from the highest point of view one of being asleep; but, not without dreams. We are filled with opinions. That is our state. We need being awakened, namely, awakened to the fact that many of these things are just unsupportable opinions. Again, I ask the same question as before. Is awakening a man teaching him? Surely not by what we ordinarily understand by teaching.

At any rate men can acquire wisdom only through striving for wisdom because if he doesn't acquire it, it will never truly be his own. Now there is another point here to be considered, namely, the obstacles to philosophy. According to the presentation that Socrates gives, for example, in the Republic, these obstacles are overwhelming. Let us read here a passage from the Republic, sixth book, 496b to c.

"There is a very small remnant Adeimantos, I said, of those who consort worthily with philosophy. Some, well-born and well-bred nature it may be, held in check by exile and so in the absence of corruptors remaining true to philosophy, as its quality bids. Or it maybe happen that a great soul born in a little town scorns and disregards its parochial affairs. And a small group might, perhaps, by natural affinity be drawn to it from the other arts which they justly disdain. And the bridle of our companion Theages also might operate as a restraint; for in the case of Theages, all of the conditions were at hand for his backsliding from philosophy but his sickly habited body, keeping him out of politics, holds him back. My own case, the divine sign is hardly worth mentioning, for I suppose that it has happened to few or none before me."

Now here we have seen how these obstacles to philosophy are overcome; none of these obstacles was overcome by teaching-- Socrates, by this demonic thing, that is not teaching; Theages' illness is not teaching; and other kinds of fate which seem to be important. One can enlarge this, perhaps, and say, things happen to men without their intending it, bad luck or good luck. And of course the bad luck would be blessings in disguise in this case; but still, something which man did not propose for himself. And what Socrates says here is not sufficient.

These things may lead, in given cases, to a kind of conversion; and this conversion can be brought about or can be facilitated by an appeal. These are all, strictly speaking, not teachings.

There is a Platonic dialogue called Theages, today regarded as spurious by everyone except Mr. Benedetti and myself. And Mr. Benedetti's master's thesis must be available from the Committee on Social Thought and it is worth reading I think.

Now here you have a young man like Hippocrates, but, he is different. He comes from upstate, in the first place, meaning from the rural part of the country not from the city itself. And he is eager to learn the tyrannical art, which is of course fundamentally what Hippocrates also wants to learn only he is not given the opportunity to spell out completely what he wants to be. He says only that he wants to be famous in the city. But how famous? That we do not know. And Socrates declined that and, not going into the question of whether he is a teacher of the tyrannical art or not, he has two excuses. First, he accepts as his companions only...it depends on eros, some feelings exist in him which he cannot arbitrarily produce and which surely cannot be produced by payment of money. And Theages and his father think that that is absolutely preposterous, to think that an old man with a beard should think of himself as an erotician, and Socrates, then, has to give another explanation which will make an impression. And then he speaks of his demonic gift and tells them absolutely terrible stories. How do you call these stories? which make people shudder?

Student: Horror stories.

Horror stories! About what happens to people who don't listen to their demonic spirits. And the subtlety of the dialogue is what Socrates means by eros and what he means by demonic spirit is fundamentally the same. Socrates a man unique, or almost unique, by his natural desire for philosophy and so on and so on. But I cannot go into this.

But if these elements, which have nothing to do with teaching and which cannot be brought about by teaching, doesn't this make philosophy utterly subjective. We hear of that very much today and certain motives of some so-called existentialists remind, of course, of Plato. But Plato was very far from being existentialist.

Now where does the reason here come in? reasoning? It is always not too difficult to show the necessity of philosophy, meaning to show that people make assumptions which are not clear and not necessary. I mean maybe we make some assumptions which are not clear but are necessary; for example, we are human beings. This is very difficult. How do we know of human beings as human beings? There are all kinds of questions. But without this assumption we cannot even begin to think. That, I would say, is a necessary assumption. And also that there

things; we cannot sensibly question that. But there are perhaps assumptions which we also make that are neither clear nor necessary. To take a simple example with which some of you are quite familiar: the fact-value distinction which plays such a great role in present day social science is a distinction which is neither clear nor necessary. In other words, it is always not too difficult to show that people claim to know what they do not know. But this does not induce people to become concerned with knowing. There are always great premiums on accepted opinions, not necessarily in terms of money, which prevent it and nothing can be done about that, nothing whatever. This was the situation in Plato's time and this is the situation at all times and no progress of science has changed that.

Now, virtue is knowledge; this means for practical purposes that the virtue possible for a man is not separable from philosophizing. That is, I think, the view which goes through all Platonic dialogues. And philosophizing requires a particular nature, particular gifts, which include a particular eros, which we can state without this particular obnoxious term--an unquenchable desire for clarity, the greatest possible clarity, and the greatest possible unwillingness to beat around the bush or to evade issues. And we know that this is not very frequent in the human race and in modern times there is this particular complication that what was in former times is not of great social power, the existence of, say, mathematics is now a terrific thing on which the whole society, in a sense, is based--modern science, which by itself doesn't have the slightest motive to raise philosophic questions, which fosters the habit of reducing philosophy to a concern with understanding or rather with clarifying in scientific terms what science is. This is the maximum we can expect there. All questions of concern to man are lost. So, I believe that we can recognize what Socrates means when he says virtue is knowledge, this enigmatic saying--as enigmatic as any saying of an oracle and yet different from oracle sayings because we can see that it makes some sense.

Now, there is, of course, another question, a grave question, which is very important here in the Protagoras. and as a matter of fact everywhere in Plato. If this is so, which we cannot accept without further ado, that the only true virtue is that which accompanies philosophizing or which follows from philosophizing, but what about the virtue of the nonphilosophers; after all the largest number of human beings at all times. That is a grave question. Now Plato has a term for that, a harsh term, vulgar virtue or a term which sounds less harsh, political virtue. Political virtue meaning here the virtue of the citizen. This is not genuine virtue according to Plato. Let us never forget that the term moral virtue never occurs in Plato. That is a coinage of Aristotle. One must be reasonable; what we mean by moral virtue, what we mean by moral consciousness is not a product of Aristotle in any way but it

is not unimportant that the term was coined so late. And, of course, since that time it was never forgotten. And we, in our thinking about these matters are, of course, inevitably prior to reflection victims of our tradition. And this tradition is primarily naturally the modern tradition.

When we speak of the moral consciousness, i.e. that we imply somehow that what can be expected of every human being is some simple decency. And we can elaborate that and give some specimens of it, not cheating, and so on and so on, needless to say, not murdering, we can do that very easily. But, did men in former times have this notion of simple decency? In a way, of course! But how consciously, how clearly? How does the prophet say, "God has told you, man, what you should do, act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before the Lord." Now in our notion of simple decency the last point is not included, obviously not. I.e. when we speak of ordinary decency we do not count piety as an essential element of decency. That is very important. Where do we find that ever? I read a statement some time ago by a very good ancient historian about some late roman writers who praise moral virtue as the only thing which counts. And I put the question somewhat more pointedly to him and he never replied to me. And then I happened to meet him somewhere and he said, well, it wasn't there and that was the reason why he hadn't replied to me. That is very rare; I mean, this thing which grew up in the enlightenment and was most clearly formulated by Kant, that which gives worth to any man is his good will, as Kant called it, his sense of duty, we can say his decency, and this does not include itself anything of religion--indirectly, yes, but not of itself.

When you look at the statements of the ancient, say the Stoics, famous for their rigorous moralism--simply take Cicero, you don't have to make learned studies of all of them, what are these virtues? Of course, prudence is one of them. And when we ordinarily speak of decency we do not today think of prudence; the modern sentimentality has taken care of that--the heart and not the mind. But prudence here means much more, it means theoretical knowledge. So that from the Stoics' point of view such things as logic and physics are virtues, meaning part of that over-all virtue by which a man is a good man. It is very hard to find that in former times. A man would say human goodness consists in morality, i.e. in proper conduct toward other human beings PERIOD. I mean, I will be grateful to the man who will show me that passage, it may be there. But it grew up in the enlightenment, in the context of the entire theological implications of the enlightenment, and is today of the modern things probably the most respectable part of our modern tradition--because today people don't even require this thesis. So, I thought these excursions, which I did not plan, are necessary to get to the answers to the questions.

So the question with which we are concerned is, to repeat, what about the virtues of the nonphilosophers? When one makes such an atrocious statement such as Socrates made by saying that virtue is knowledge, which means in effect the only thing which is respectable is philosophizing and its concomitants--that is clear for Socrates, a man who philosophizes cannot be a fake, cannot be competitive, cannot be in any way vicious--but, what about the large majority of mankind? Now, there, possible virtue, as I said, is called vulgar or political virtue. Now Plato does not understand the same as Protagoras does because Protagoras, as we have seen, understands political virtue in a very narrow sense from which courage, for example, is excluded; whereas Plato admits as a matter of course that there is a political courage, as distinguished from true courage. At any rate, the key point and this is what is taken up by Aristotle on a very large scale, the basis of this non-philosophic virtue is habituation. You get it by being told as a child, as Protagoras describes it quite nicely, do this, don't do that. And if you do what you are told not to do you are spanked, that is, of course, part of the habituation. And this clearly consists of parts. I mean a child may be temperate, or a grown-up human being for that matter, and not courageous. We all know that. We see that time and again; men who are very cowardly and yet very honest. We find no difficulty in saying that. So, virtue consists of parts and we admit that the parts are separable, as is shown by the example. An indication of this state of affairs we find even in Plato's Republic, I mentioned this on a former occasion, the lowest class of men possess justice and moderation but not courage. You remember that.

Now it would be of great interest to raise this question in order to get a full picture, within the limits of the possible now,--how does Socrates' virtue look in the light of the common sense notion of virtue? I occasionally referred to a passage in Xenophon's Hero in which Hero makes a distinction between three kinds of men, the brave, the just, and the wise. The tyrant fears the brave because they might make a rebellion. He fears the just because they may be desired as rulers by the multitude, so the just would make a rebellion and therefore are competitors for the title. And he fears also the wise men who are a third category, as they say today, different from the brave and the just. He fears the wise because they might contrive something, figure out something, you know, those rude cunning fellows. Now if we apply this simple statement to Socrates, what did he do when he was subject to tyrants? Well, he surely didn't make revolts, he surely was not desired as a ruler by the multitude, well, he contrived more or less to survive and not to get mixed up in the horrible crimes into which the tyrants tried to get him. Now what do we learn about this question of Socrates' virtue? Now we turn it around, as it were, looking not at the many in the light of the Socratic

notion of virtue, but turn it around, look at Socrates in the light of the common sense view of virtue. I believe that we discussed the litigation scene and we got an inkling when Socrates proceeds unjustly yet from justice. Needless to say the final two lies are also interesting. Of course, no one except the pedant would say Socrates is a liar because he said these two things but still it is quite remarkable that he can so easily lie. Now the Simonides scene is the key passage as far as this question is concerned. And someone referred to it in the previous discussion that here it is shown in agreement with Socrates' view that no man is wise, it is shown that no man's virtue or goodness is uninterrupted; there can be all kinds of things which bring him down, all kinds of misfortunes. The wise man is compelled to act under certain circumstances to act unwisely, or the just man is compelled to act unjustly. Goodness therefore depends on being loved by the gods or on not being conquered by chance. Now there is only one example given of a wise man who acts badly or unjustly under compulsion. And that is Simonides himself. Being a subject of tyrants, of people whom he regards as unjust and otherwise defective, and yet, he didn't keep his mouth shut only but he praised them. That is quite a difference. You know the examples from our age, for example from Germany. People who refrained from blaming Hitler by being subject to Hitler is one thing but the people who praised Hitler, which they were not compelled to do, that is another story. So, and Simonides did this kind of thing--an act which is unjust and cowardly but prudent. This would imply that prudence is something different from courage and justice as was implied in the passage of the Hero to which I referred--we can say injustice motivated by fear of tyrants and this we must always understand in reading Plato or Xenophon that the multitude as such is such a tyrant, at least potentially, unless it is severely limited by constitutional limitations. That is much better. This is one thing, but, look at the explanation which Socrates gives of his conduct in the Gorgias. He says, if I am accused by the city, how can I defend myself? I am in the position of a physician who is accused by a cook before a tribunal of children. I never gave you candies and I always gave you bitter pills and cut you and so on and so on. So, he could not possibly tell them the truth because they wouldn't understand it. Here there is no cowardice involved. And we know also that he refused to escape from prison to say nothing of his conduct in war. So here we have another example where someone refrains from speaking, conceals what he thinks, not from fear, but because there was no alternative to him; it would be a wholly absurd action to try to explain. So, then, the question of courage doesn't arise here, one could say.

Accordingly, Xenophon, in his two lists of Socratic virtues, does not mention courage; which does not mean that Socrates was a coward but that courage doesn't apply to him. Socrates went to war and was a good soldier. Which virtue did

he practice in going to war? Not courage.

Student: Justice.

Justice. Now what does justice mean here? Was he sure that these were just and wise actions, the Peloponnesian War?

Student: The city protects or allows you...

Yes, but, more simply and directly. What happens in war? How come A is sent to campaign and B is not sent? I mean disregarding now dishonest actions, there are laws to determine who is to go to war and who is not, even if you use the lot, the lot is still the legal instrument. So justice means here law-abidingness. Socrates was law-abiding even if it cost his life. Very well, that is good enough but then we have to raise the question was Socrates unqualifiedly law-abiding? We have it from his own mouth in the Apology where he is asked, he asks himself. What about if the Athenians make a compromise proposal, you stop philosophizing and we let you go? In other words, we make it a law that philosophizing is strictly forbidden. And Socrates says, no, I would not obey that law. So, disregarding other cases, Socrates is not unqualifiedly law-abiding. Rightly. Because no man in his senses can swear that he will obey any possible law which may be enacted; that is impossible. And this is not identical with anarchism or with Thoreau but I think that is truly simple common sense. Everyone I believe can imagine laws which he would not obey. And so law-abidingness won't do. Well, we first said let us make a distinction between justice and law-abidingness. All right, then we have to take some further steps, which we cannot possibly take now, on better grounds I hope than those on which Protagoras said now we have to turn to something else.

So, let us meet next Monday for some coaching, if this is the proper term, and also perhaps to try to bring the various threads, some of the threads which have not been brought together, together.

Plato's Protagoras. A Course by Professor Leo Strauss
in the Department of Political Science
at the University of Chicago, Spring 1965.

Lecture 17, May 24, 1965

First a practical problem: the exam subject. Will you take it down.

"Socrates' critique of Protagoras' political science"

Now as a back ground for this subject, which does not necessarily mean that you should speak about it but which should somehow be present to your mind, I remind you of a broader question. In what way does the critique of the Sophists by Plato and Aristotle lay the foundation for classical political philosophy? So that you do not think that you deal with only a very little question on one minor dialogue, this broad question is important.

Also as a piece of background I begin with coherent exposition by which I intend not merely to coach you but rather to some appropriate end. In the Protagoras we find one of the first references to political science which can also mean political art i.e. that every political scientist must have certain interests in the first occurrence of our notion of political science, however much it may have changed its meaning. It is true that the term...and that perhaps even aggravates the importance...the term is used not by Protagoras but by Socrates in order to describe, not Socrates' own pursuit, but the pursuit of Protagoras, the most celebrated Sophist.

Now this in itself is not particularly surprising because if I am not mistaken you will find in every textbook now the view that political science, in whatever way it may be understood, is of sophistic origin (the simple schema of the way the great philosophers prior to Socrates dealt with the cosmos.) And then there came in this time of disintegration the nasty fellows the sophists and they dealt in their way, in a very inept way, well, there are people who say today in a very good way, there is a book by a man called H. H. called the Liberal...

Student: The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics.

Temper, that is a very good word because it reminds you of distemper. But it is the Liberal Temper of Greek Politics in which he makes the most of this. And he thinks they are practically identical with present-day behavioralists with a pragmatist bent. Good. At any rate, there is a very common view that political science is of a sophistic origin.

Therefore one must raise this question: What is the character of the sophistic political art? And why is it radically insufficient and defective, regarded as such by Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and all their great followers? The most accessible remark you find, a most simple and straightforward remark, you find at the end of Aristotle's Ethics where he says that the Sophists reduced, or almost reduced, political science to rhetoric. In other words, that is wholly inadequate. The most important and the most striking parallel to the passage

at the end of the Ethics, I found in Xenophon's Anabasis, the account of his great exploit in Asia, toward the end of the second book. There he speaks of a man who was a pupil of the most famous rhetorician, another general there called P. And this general was a very nice man but he was not very good as a general because he was good at appealing to the good in the nice soldiers, and praising them if they act nobly. But he couldn't do anything about the bad ones; he simply lacked this. Now Xenophon shows by his whole account that he, who was a pupil of Socrates and not of Gorgias the rhetorician, could do both, could handle the good as well as the bad. The connection with the end of the Ethics is this: Aristotle makes there clear that rhetoric, speeches, won't be sufficient; you must have laws--and we can say without any error mistaking Aristotle's meaning laws with teeth in them. The Sophists believed in the omnipotence of speech, of persuasive speech and Socrates did not believe in it. And this simple, common sensical disagreement of Socrates--because most people would agree with Socrates--that speech alone is not sufficient for ruling human beings--is the germ of the classical political philosophy.

Forgive me for reading to you my summary of this point in the City and Man, page 29:

From this we understand why the nature of political things feeds to some extent, not only reason--this we all know that rational policy may be defeated--but persuasion in any form. And one grasps another reason why the Sophistic reduction of the political art to rhetoric is absurd. Xenophon's companion P had been a pupil of Gorgias, the famous rhetorician. Thanks to Gorgias' instruction he was capable of ruling gentlemen by means of praise or abstention from praise; yet he was utterly incapable of instilling his soldiers with respect and fear of himself, he was unable to discipline them. Xenophon, on the other hand, a pupil of Socrates, possessed the full political art, i.e. spoke persuasion and the other. The very same thought, the insufficiency of persuasion for the guidance of the many and the necessity of laws with teeth in them constitutes the transition from Aristotle's Ethics to his Politics. It is within this context that Aristotle denounces the Sophists' reduction of politics to rhetoric. (And now I draw a conclusion.) So far from being Machiavellians, the Sophists, believing in the omnipotence of speech were blind to the sternness of politics.

This is the picture that we get at least on the basis of these important reports.

Now this view, that rhetoric as such supplies the solution to political problems is used often by Plato himself. For example in the Gorgias where the true politics is presented

as the noble rhetoric. And above all, in the Republic, where the key question is, how can one persuade the city to accept the rule of the philosophers? Of course, the philosophers will have to rule and they will have guardians who are heavily armed, but how will the philosophers become accepted in the first place? So, this is to be done by rhetoric and therefore Thrasymachus, this very ambiguous character, plays a very great role in the Republic.

But what about the Protagoras? Now the Protagoras, in contradistinction to its sister dialogue the Gorgias, deals with sophistry and not with rhetoric. And this leads up to the suggestion that the true science of human things is the science of measuring pleasures and pains, one could say the p calculus--but it is here, of course, the pleasures and pains of the individual not of the society at large. The power of the passions, that is the implication, cannot be broken by mere persuasion but only by an exact science. This will do what no persuasion will do. Now, whether that is a reasonable proposal or not each one of us must figure out by himself. Whether people, even if they know exactly the pain with which they will be punished for a present pleasure; whereas now they do not have an exact relation, they cannot say that it is eleven times greater but only considerably greater, whether this exact measurement will have an greater effect than the inexact statement, you must see by yourself.

So, in the Protagoras everything depends then on the question, the political problem, which is no longer mentioned as such here, it depends on the possibility of this p calculus in the sense defined. Now what about the possibility of such a measuring art? First, do we know that it is possible? This is a question which I address to the class. Do we know that it is possible? Well, Socrates says we will investigate it on another occasion. And above all, however, this possibility is tacitly questioned by Socrates' denying that virtue is teachable. If virtue were the figuring out what is the greatest pleasure, this figuring out could be taught just as you can figure out lengths and just as you can find out the exact number of something. But the thesis of the Protagoras is that this figuring out is not only a condition of virtue but it is virtue; otherwise virtue wouldn't be knowledge. And we can safely say this substitution of the p calculus for virtue is not meant seriously by Socrates.

Of course one has to think about this: what, I mean, as ordinary human beings of some experience, as even the youngest of you are, what if you were confronted with the proposition that virtue is identical with the p calculus, as used here, what would you say? If you have that you are a good man, if you don't have it you are a bad man!

Student: Virtue would then be a pretty low thing

Well, all right, maybe it is a pretty low thing. This would

not finish the argument. But what is the obvious flaw of this thought?

Student: Well, I believe that Protagoras makes the objection. He doesn't want to swallow the calculus, he thinks that he has to hold out for the noble.

Yes, but, on the other hand, Protagoras is not a very good witness because he ain't good at arithmetic or at mathematics.

Student: Yes, but he may be good at knowing...you are asking for public...

Yes, but what is the simple, common sensical objection if someone would say that?

Student: All virtue would have to include prudence as well as justice which...

Oh yes, that is somehow implied, however dubiously. Yes.

Student: There wouldn't be any virtue in the world.

All right but maybe some of these people say what we ordinarily understand by virtue is just a phantom, a phantasm, and we shouldn't take it seriously.

Student: Well, all right, then how about virtue inculcated by habit?

Yes, but why not state it directly? You are right but state it directly.

Student: You can't just simply have a slide rule because...

Well, all right, that is, of course, a deeper question regarding the calculus itself but the question is assuming that it were possible, could it be virtue? I believe that one can say without hesitation, no! because we know so many people who know that this is harmful to them, whether they know it exactly or inexactly, and yet choose it. In other words this phenomenon of being overcome by present impressions be they pleasures or fears cannot be disposed of by this kind of reasoning.

Now what is the next point? What is the explicit argument of Socrates against Protagoras' claim, which claim implies the rejection of the art of measuring pleasures? Well, perhaps the question is poorly phrased. Protagoras' claim, originally made, implies the rejection of the art of measurement; he doesn't even think of that, otherwise he couldn't have said

virtue is something very different from knowledge. So, then if we turn to Protagoras' original claim and forget about the art of measuring, what is the explicit argument of Socrates against Protagoras' claim? Here is a man who raises a claim interpreted by Socrates to mean that Protagoras claims to possess and to teach the political art, or the political science. How does Socrates show that Protagoras does not possess that art?

Student: He equates the good with the pleasant.

Well, Socrates shows a way which you can make the equation of the good with the pleasant stick to some extent. The whole tradition of hedonism is based on this.

Student: Protagoras doesn't know what virtue is.

Exactly. And therefore he is finished. Or, perhaps, more precisely what is the relation of virtue which is one, as Protagoras claims, to its parts. But you are quite right. The simpler and clearer statement is that Protagoras does not know what virtue is. How can he teach it? Good.

Now this much I wanted to say, in a general way just to loosen the ground a bit, to get the hard and fast into a liquid condition. Now I would like to give a summary regarding the peculiarity of the Protagoras in contrasting it with the Gorgias. And if I omit something from my list I would be very grateful to you if you would remind me of it; perhaps it was implied in what I said and if not I have to have it.

Now the Gorgias clearly deals with rhetoric whereas the Protagoras deals with Sophists, and not sophistry. Sophistry is presented in the Gorgias as higher than rhetoric. But the theme of the Protagoras is not sophistry. The question of what sophistry is is raised in the conversation with Hippocrates, as you may remember, but it is not answered because Hippocrates cannot answer it. It is not raised in the conversation with Protagoras at all. What Protagoras claims, which Socrates then describes as the political art, is not sophistry; perhaps it is an off-shoot of sophistry, we do not know, but it is surely not sophistry. We do not learn from the Protagoras what sophistry is. We see only a symptom. So, there is a certain imbalance in that the Gorgias very clearly discusses rhetoric whereas the Protagoras does not clearly discuss sophistry.

Now the second feature which I observe is that the Gorgias is a performed dialogue and the Protagoras is a narrated dialogue. Since the Gorgias is a performed dialogue, we do not know why Socrates sought the dialogue with Gorgias, beyond which Socrates wished to find out from Gorgias what he thought about rhetoric. But why is in no way answered. Whereas, in the

narrated dialogue Protagoras we know why Socrates sought the conversation with Protagoras. Well, since you have read it as well as I did, why did Socrates seek the conversation with Protagoras?

Student: Well, he was forced into it in order to show, to dissuade, to show Hippocrates that it was not worth his while to study under Protagoras.

Yes, we can say, with a slight exaggeration that Socrates tried to protect Hippocrates against corruption. Good.

The Protagoras is a compulsory dialogue, Socrates compelled by Hippocrates. And the Gorgias as you would see by reading the very first page is a voluntary dialogue. Socrates is eager, spontaneously eager, to talk to Gorgias.

Whereas, in the Protagoras the discussions take place chiefly with the hero, if we call hero, the man mentioned in the title. Whereas, in the Gorgias there is very little discussion with the hero, Gorgias. Now if we try to understand that, first in the case of the Gorgias, we would see by studying the Gorgias that Socrates doesn't think highly of Gorgias' rhetoric and silently suggests to this top rhetorician the highest purpose which his rhetoric would serve. It would have to be, in order to be truly respectable, ministerial to virtue. But virtue is identical with philosophy so it must be ministerial to philosophy. The discussion in the Gorgias takes place for the sake of Gorgias; he is to learn. There are quite a few passages in the latter part of the dialogue, especially in the Callicles section when Callicles refuses to go on and Gorgias insists that he wants to hear it.

In the Protagoras, on the other hand, Socrates openly suggests to Protagoras the true kind of sophistry, namely this calculus. You remember, this is the way you have to argue in order to convince people that sophistry is good. He leaves it, however, doubtful whether this kind of knowledge or science is possible. The discussion in the Protagoras takes place for the sake of Hippocrates, not for Protagoras or any other Sophist. And with this is connected the sixth difference.

In the Protagoras the discussion is not completed. It is clear at the end that they do not yet know the key point. Whereas in the Gorgias the discussion is completed. The myth in the case of the Gorgias a clear sign that the discussion is completed.

Now, number seven. In the Gorgias, the discussion of rhetoric, the subject matter is linked up with the question of Socrates' fate and his whole way of life. No such link-up exists in the Protagoras. Since the Gorgias deals with the question of Socrates' fate, his way of life, the question of the right way of life becomes the theme (and this is the eighth point.) Socrates is presented as a defender of justice,

moderation, and philosophy. In the Protagoras, however, Socrates is not presented and does not present himself as the defender of justice and moderation. And, connected with this point and it is crucial, in the Protagoras he argued on the premise that the good is identical with the pleasant which we know leads to the art of measurement, natural science. Entirely different is the situation in the Gorgias. The premise in the Gorgias is that the good differs from the pleasant. And this is connected with a sketch of mathematical cosmology, as the historians would say, reminding of Pythagorean things and foreshadowing Plato's own . In the Gorgias the need for a techné, a science, or art is traced to the fact of distinguishing between the good and the pleasant. In the Gorgias, the premise is that the good differs from the pleasant and there is no art regarding the pleasant, which is a certain difficulty--why should there not be an art of cookery, cooking? This is at least a legitimate objection to what Socrates has said. According to the Gorgias we need an art in order to distinguish between the good and the pleasant, and the good is not pleasant. Whereas the need for an art is traced in the Protagoras to the necessity of distinguishing between two kinds of pleasures, the preferable pleasures from those that we reject.

I come now to the next. Everyone reading the Protagoras, the beginning especially, must be struck by the fact that Socrates and Hippocrates have such difficulties in getting into Callias' house where the Sophists are assembled. We shall say, then, to generalize, the Sophists are difficult of access. And this difficulty is due to what? This difficulty of getting access to Protagoras and the other Sophists is due to what?

Student: Well, the fact that sophistry is a dangerous profession.

Yes, but more immediately?

Student: The Sophists stay in and the slaves despise them.

No. The eunuch, they can't get in because of the eunuch. But the eunuch is an enemy of the Sophists. So the difficulty of access to the Sophists is due to the enemies of the Sophists not to the Sophists themselves, I mean we have no trace of that. Yes?

Student: Couldn't that be linked with their caution.

Yes. I will come to that but I must proceed step by step. Incidentally, what about Socrates? Is access to Socrates difficult or easy?

Student: Easy.

Very easy. At least in Plato's Socrates! What about the

Clouds? Does anyone of you remember the Clouds? Well, the comical expression of the difference between Aristophanes' Socrates and Plato's or Xenophon's Socrates is this that Aristophanes' Socrates, like a Sophist, is difficult of access and the Platonic Xenophonic Socrates is easy of access. Yes, indeed.

Now what about the Gorgias?

Student: [inaudible]

Yes, but after all, he can't say I can't let you in because I don't like you. After all, he is an employee, he has to give a reason reflecting the master's opinion. But why does he say it? Because he regards them as Sophists.

Student: Yes, but when he asks to see Protagoras rather than Callias he lets them in.

Yes, but not without some grumbling. That is very clear. In the Gorgias, however, there is no difficulty of access whatever. Socrates is welcomed by Callicles to this meeting with Gorgias.

Now, number ten which is connected with the last point. In the Protagoras the hero claims to be frank. In the Gorgias the hero does not raise this claim. He may be frank; people who do not raise the claim to be frank are usually more frank than the others. And I have seen people who, when you ask them for the time of the day, they might say, frankly I do not know. And I have seen some of these people who are very unfrank and were very prodigal with their expression frank. But at any rate, the underlying fact is that Protagoras claims to be frank and Gorgias does not raise this claim.

And now the point which I will make as the last, eleven. Protagoras raises the exorbitant claim, exorbitant in the light of the end of the dialogue, to be a teacher of virtue--provided you have the money and can pay for the instructions you will become better every day you are with him. Gorgias does not raise this claim. We have here not only the silence of Gorgias but in the Meno there is an adherent of Gorgias who says in 95b to c: Socrates asks Meno

"Shall we say the Sophists are teachers of virtue?"
And Meno says, "No...."

Student: "No, no, Socrates, I assure you. Sometimes you may hear them refer to it as teachable but sometimes as not
Then, are we to call those persons teachers of this thing when they do not agree on that great question?

I should say not Socrates.

Well, and what of the Sophists? Do you consider these, its only professors, to be teachers of virtue.

That is a point, Socrates, for which I admire Gorgias...

Yes, to a high degree or "particularly."

Student: "That is a point, Socrates, for which I particularly admire Gorgias. You will never hear him promising this and he ridicules the others when he hears them promising it. Skill in speaking is what he takes it to be their business to produce."

That is all. So, Gorgias has nothing to do with that exorbitant claim. He is a much more sensible man, he teaches rhetoric.

Student: Well, in the Gorgias he is led into that claim by Socrates, isn't he. And isn't that what brings about his downfall.

Not quite. No, no, that is rather tricky. Socrates forces him to admit...no, Socrates asks him, do you also teach justice? He says, no that is not rhetoric. And Socrates says, look, if he is a crook and you give him this great weapon of rhetoric then you will be held responsible for the terrible things he does with the art he learned from you. And Gorgias doesn't like that. And, thereupon, Gorgias says, well, all come to me and know what justice is. But if they should not happen to know it, in other words if they are completely ill-bred dropouts, then I will tell them of the just things. But he does not claim to make them better.

Now, by raising this exorbitant claim--and it is exorbitant because he says that I am much better than any Athenian. To be together or to spend your time with Pericles or with other elder statesmen is much less useful to you for possessing virtue, which includes of course political excellence, than to be together with a stranger from southern Italy, Sicily. Protagoras sticks his neck out by the fact of his claim and therefore the problem of concealment arises. Since it is dangerous, should he conceal his pursuit or should he not conceal it? The problem of concealment does not arise for Gorgias, as we see from the Gorgias' silence on this subject. And we have seen that Protagoras says, in contradistinction to all earlier Sophists, he is the first to frankly admit to being a Sophist. And this frankness is a great thing; and this is, in a way, the most obvious difference between Socrates and Protagoras--that Socrates takes the side of the concealers. In other words, Protagoras has his intellectual ancestry, he gives the long list. Socrates gives the list of his intellectual ancestry in the Simonides section. Both, in spite of their opposition, one is laconic--Socrates' is laconic--and the other is non-laconic--because no one could say that Homer is laconic, both are concealers. And Socrates agrees with both against this new-fangled heretic, Protagoras, who says that concealment is unnecessary. And this means, however, in the immediate context of the Protagoras not in other contexts, that Socrates conceals his way of life, he conceals philosophy

which doesn't come up as such, and especially he conceals the opposition of the two ways of life--of the philosophic and non-philosophic--which is a key theme of the Gorgias. So this grand development, of Socrates' way of life its premises and consequences, is wholly absent from the Protagoras. And so he conceals, but, at the same time, he conceals the concealing by an extraordinary act at the beginning. He tells this absolutely private affair which happened in the house of Callias to the first comer who asks. You find no parallel to that in the other dialogue. And of course he publishes also what one may call with a gross exaggeration the bedroom scene when Hippocrates comes. Good.

But the question which we should raise is this. Since this concealment issue is in no dialogue so patently as in the Protagoras, is Protagoras truly frank as he claims to be? We have some evidence, perhaps not for settling the question but for articulating it. Yes.

Student: Well, first of all, there is this speech about the political art which he claims to teach. And he would appear not to be frank because he doesn't talk about those things which would give someone prominence in the city, he just talks about justice, moderation and piety. And that clearly is not the main body of his teachings.

That is true, he is almost silent about his own art. But he speaks explicitly even while raising the claim of frankness of the precautionary measures he has taken at the same time. In other words, frankness is a measure of precaution and therefore the primary consideration is not frankness but caution. Now caution may also require some other means apart from caution. And furthermore, the initial scene, I believe I did not bring this out sufficiently, when Socrates and Hippocrates enter the building, the house, and then they find three groups: Protagoras' group, Hippias' group, and Prodicus' group. Now the only group where Socrates found out what they talked about was in the case of the Hippias group which was precipitated by the fact that they had the mathematical instruments, but still, he heard what they said. In the case of Prodicus it is explicitly said that they couldn't hear it because of the bad acoustics. But in the case of the Protagoras group, it is not explicitly said but suggested by the silence about it that Socrates did not hear what Protagoras was telling his group. Surely, Protagoras admits to being a Sophist, this is his frankness, he does not say that he has no secret teaching whatsoever. And we can even prove that he did not mean it by a very striking occurrence. How does he begin his exposition?

Student: By the myth.

With a myth. And the myth, of course, is not meant to be literally true. We have to translate it. And it is in this case very easy to translate it into non-mythical language. Yes. And the other adaptations to Athenian democracy that he makes, after having been warned by Socrates of the danger.

So, these were the main points I wanted to make and I would like to add only one thing, rather with reference to future readings by yourself or, perhaps, with me or whatever may be the case. These two sister dialogues, the Protagoras and the Gorgias converge, as one may say toward another dialogue. And this I know only since about a few days, after I looked at the dialogue in question for a very long time--and that is the dialogue Meno. It is connected with the Gorgias by the very obvious fact that Meno is an adherent of Gorgias, as Gorgias has referred to. And the Protagoras is connected in a way more visibly because this question--is virtue knowledge and therefore is virtue teachable--the question which arose at the end of the Protagoras is the theme of the Meno. I mean, I am not interested in the question which sequence Plato has written the dialogues, which was the chief concern of classical scholarship in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and to some extent even now. I believe that is unimportant because even if we knew by divine revelation when they were written we cannot exclude by this that Plato might have conceived of them much earlier. I mean, Plato might have conceived of the Laws, probably his latest work, at the time he wrote the Republic and simply said, I am going to write this other book when I am an old man, when I have in every way the qualities acquired for speaking about law. And the same applies to all other considerations. I mean, if you have the journal of a writer, the diary of a writer, in which he tells you, today this occurred to me for the first time, big day! For example, as we know of in other cases, Nietzsche and we know of Kant such great changes in his thought and can date them. But we have no diaries of this kind and we have only the dialogues. And we have a lot of gossip!, especially from later times, which is always interesting to hear because it at least has the advantage of not being the brainchild of modern scholars. But, of course, this is not sufficient, there are many stupid people in classical antiquity. And so, I think we have to try to understand the inner connection of the dialogues, regardless of any question of time when they were written.

When we looked at the beginning of the Protagoras, Socrates narrating the dialogue to someone named, in a way, (his proper name wasn't given) the comrade. In the Republic for example Socrates also narrates but we don't know to whom. It is a fair guess that the people to whom he narrates it are the ones at the beginning of the Timaeus, Timaeus, Critias, and . But that doesn't appear from the title page of the Republic. But here we see the addressee, although nameless, in a way identified--a nameless comrade. Now this feature of

the Protagoras links it up most directly only with one other dialogue and that is the Euthydemus where Socrates narrates a conversation to a named comrade, namely Crito, the hero of the dialogue Crito. You would see immediately by reading it that the subject is very closely akin to that of the Protagoras, only much more obviously bantering, not to say frivolous. But still there is the question of sophistry on a much lower level because Euthydemus, the hero of this dialogue, and his brothers are just clowns; while Protagoras cannot be called a clown in any condition.

There is another dialogue with which the Protagoras is obviously linked. And I mention this because this reflection occurred regarding every Platonic dialogue. You know there are say thirty-five dialogues and not every dialogue is linked to every other. There are families. But this does not exclude that one member could not be wed...

...I hope I do not have to state again that engaging in this kind of study of Plato's work, we are just doing merely historical studies about some man, dead long ago, and we should rather be concerned with, say, what is going on in Vietnam and Santo Domingo, but, I have a hunch that our thinking about Santo Domingo and Vietnam will be improved if we take this round-about way of thinking about the classics. Now, there is another dialogue to which we are pointed by the Protagoras, less visibly but none the less possibly.

I noted the fact that some of the pupils of the Sophists mentioned by Socrates--you remember when he comes in and sees these and those with Protagoras, these and these with Hippias, and these and these with Prodicus--some of these pupils of the Sophists reappear as speaking characters--in the Protagoras they don't speak--in one of the most magnificent Platonic works, in the Symposium, the Banquet. And this, to begin with, is very hard to understand. What does Protagoras have to do with the Symposium? Now the Banquet culminates in a speech by Socrates. It is not a dialogue in the ordinary sense because we have rather a sequence of speeches, subsequent speeches. The last speech is that by Socrates. Well, in one sense it isn't, because after Socrates is through, a drunken man crashes the party and makes a speech on Socrates, and that is Alcibiades. But Alcibiades speaks about Socrates whereas the speeches were all on the same theme, eros, love. Now in the Banquet Socrates tells to the friends there, he reveals to them a secret which had been revealed to him by that extraordinary woman, Diotima. Incidentally, there is another more obvious connection between the two dialogues. At the beginning or near the beginning of the Protagoras Socrates standing in in the vestibule before the house in silent meditation. The

same happens at the beginning of the Banquet and nowhere else. Plato could not have made clearer the connection. Now it is, of course, possible that these speeches about eros prior to Socrates' speech are in a way sophistic speeches. Speeches, not in the ordinary sense of the word based on illegitimate inferences but on the cosmology which the sophists adhere to. That is quite possible. But the fact that Plato almost crosses the "t's" and dots the "i's" in order to draw our attention to the relation between the Protagoras and the Banquet causes us to take this quite seriously. Now this is the end of what I shall say coherently and we have some time left for friendly, or unfriendly, exchange.

Student: A minor point. Between 4 and 6 I don't see where to put the number 5 in.

Well, order is not very good but I will gladly tell you in order that you see the amount of my disposedness.

Student: Is it that you distinguish the point of, in Protagoras the discussion is chiefly with the type of _____ and then the question of for the sake of whom...

No, Socrates silently suggests to Gorgias the highest... Socrates openly suggests to Protagoras the true kind of sophistry.

Student: Will you repeat the exam question?

I am glad there is one man here of common sense bringing us back...well, there is no exam question:

"Socrates' critique of Protagoras' political science" or political art or whatever you call it.

Student: It seemed to me and this may be a completely wrong impression that the dangers from Protagoras didn't become clear, or wouldn't have become clear to Hippocrates; except that, well, he didn't know what virtue is. That is a fact and there could be considerable damages...

All right, but, what...well, very good. In other words Protagoras was not shown up as a corruptor of the young in a way which Hippocrates could understand. That is quite true. But, still, something happened which was bound to affect Hippocrates' eagerness to become a pupil of Protagoras. What then?

Student: Well, I would say that he got beaten.

Yes, yes, yes, good. Now why is this better than simply showing Protagoras up as a corruptor of the youth? Because I make one assumption. Socrates is a wise man and will choose a

wise course of action. Why is it better to deflate Protagoras than to present him as a corruptor of the young? I mean this kind of question we are concerned with today all the time.

Student: Because then he's appealing to Hippocrates' courage and manliness than to his possibly very narrow moderation and temperance which would be necessary to keep him away from corruptors.

Yes, that is true but it is a big complication. Yes?

Student: Well, to show him up as a corruptor you would have to explain his whole course of teaching...

Well, Protagoras would be too clever. I mean, he would find a way out of that.

Student: Hippocrates shows at the beginning of the discussion with Socrates that he is aware that there is something shameful about being a Sophist by blushing. But that doesn't perturb him in order to deter him from...

Assuming that Hippocrates is not very intelligent, and I think that is a fair assumption, he doesn't notice that Protagoras is a corruptor. Protagoras contradicts himself and he is reduced to silence and Socrates is the winner in all these contests--that everyone can see and Hippocrates also can see and this, of course, since hitherto regarded Protagoras as wisdom incarnate where one must spend lots of money to be a pupil of his, he sees that he is not so hot. I can have it cheaper when I go to Socrates.

Student: [barely audible] First, if you make an attack on a person's character rather than simply showing him wrong, especially in a place where he is surrounded by friends, it's too easy for him to simply say he is an immoderate man and why should you listen to him? The second thing is that the same thing is worse when you have the majority and are surrounded by friends and a man who is held to be a corruptor of youth is held out alone--the defense can not be made in the same way.

Yes, but have you never heard the word character assassination; and such an accusation of Socrates would simply say, Protagoras you are a wicked man ruining these people. Well, this would be most improper conduct because, after all, Protagoras behaved with ordinary courtesy and you cannot do that. Now a certain urbanity was taken for granted in Athens and Socrates always acts in accordance with that.

Student: Well, people in general, young men of Hippocrates' type in particular, are attracted to what appears to be

dangerous and corrupting whereas they're not attracted very much at all to a fool. If Protagoras can be shown to be, to have lost a verbal battle, he will lose much of his attractiveness. For Socrates to say that it is dangerous for Hippocrates to study under Protagoras will increase the attraction.

He said that.

Student: Yes, and Hippocrates was not at all impressed.

No, no.

Student: And to show it would not impress Hippocrates nearly as much as simply to show that Protagoras is not that wonderful.

What we simply call the deflating or debunking.

Student: Socrates, too, is accused of corrupting the youth and Socrates is a philosopher but because the people who have to judge these things, obviously can differ between a sophist and a philosopher [intermittently inaudible] But Socrates has to defend the people who allow him to live the seventy years against those dangerous doctrines ...in such a way so as to keep himself free to philosophize about the...of ancient doctrines.

Yes, that is a point from which I would start. I would say that it would do greater harm to Hippocrates to become just a hater of Sophists than to be induced in a particular case not to become a pupil of Sophists because he would not have discrimination enough to distinguish between a Sophist and a philosopher. And the fact that he adheres to Socrates is never explained. But I suppose that Socrates was somehow known to his family. You know, a fellow you can trust, an easy going man, and you just step in whenever you like and who never takes anything ill.

Student: Does Socrates go to visit Protagoras with the assumption that he is unwise or is that something which he finds out?

No, he had seen him before and he knew Protagoras. I take for granted he knew Protagoras. But if we disregard his moral motive, the desire to help Hippocrates, if we disregard that entirely, I think he has a somewhat whimsical motive, to see how Protagoras will act in such a situation. Yes?

Student: Am I to understand you to say that those dialogues are related together, related to one another in groups?

Yes, but I say that dialogue A belongs to group alpha but may also belong to a group beta. Is this not very simple to understand. Plato's dialogues as a whole are an imitation of the world, of the cosmos. Now, not everything in the world is directly connected with everything else but an indirect connection always exists. That makes sense. Yes.

Student: Well, I didn't understand why you said before why it would be better for Hippocrates to become, well, a possible pupil of the sophists than become a mere hater of the sophists. I mean, I see that it would be better for Socrates as a philosopher. But it would seem that Hippocrates' character, he could be a man of very fine character, and still hate the sophists and philosophers. I mean, wouldn't he be better off hating sophists.

Yes, but would he not be better off if he would become a pupil of Protagoras, is that what you mean?

Student: No. You suggested that it would be better if he would be a pupil of Protagoras than a mere hater of sophists.

No, I did not. He should not be a pupil of Protagoras but he also should not be a hater of sophists as sophists because he could not distinguish. In this particular case, because of the presence of Socrates in Athens, it was possible to deflate this particular charlatan. But there are not always Socrates's around and as I know from my youth and some of you may not yet know it because you are too young it takes some time before you can distinguish between charlatans and non-charlatans. I mean there are gross cases where men are so patently charlatans that even a student of eighteen or nineteen will not be fooled.

Student: But suppose there were some people, many people, in Athens who just don't have the ability, they will never be able to discriminate?

Yes, but therefore they had a very simple weapon against that, like the eunuch--sophists be damned!--and then unable to distinguish between the sophists and Socrates. And this eunuch even thought that poor Hippocrates is a sophist.

Student: Well, that would be better...

Well, this is a certain protection but it is also, of course, a danger. You know, these organizations which preserve the established can also get out of hand; they need an injection of wisdom. I mean, I believe you are familiar with parallels from the American present. You know there is some reason, some discernment, some discretion which is necessary and Socrates was a conservative man but he was conservative in a broader way;

keep the old practice and the old orders but in such a way that freedom of thought, of thinking, is possible, at least for those who will make good use of it. But since a legislator, poor fellow, cannot make this distinction between those who will make a good use and those who will make a bad use you cannot have simply a law because a law would be unable to distinguish. How would you distinguish by a legal provision between a philosopher and sophist? Because if you do, the sophists will appear as philosophers. Very simple, yes? Clever people can evade laws, and especially laws of that kind. There is no legal possibility of drawing the distinction. Thoughtful and honest men can make the distinction properly, and will make it, but where is the guarantee that the judges or the magistrates will always be thoughtful and honest men? There are some institutional safeguards. You know, some lines can be drawn somewhere. That is true. For example, there is no obvious consequence for the need of freedom of thought that there must be perfect freedom for obscenity, some Berkley students seem to have thought so. But I believe that is an illegitimate conclusion because there is no thought involved in that. We have to muddle through that but this muddling through may be in the case of men of judgment not be muddling through at all but clear judgment in this case different from a clear judgment in another case. That is possible.

Student: Is not Protagoras clearly trying to say in effect that teaching should carry with it a moral significance? He seems to be introducing a moral element into teaching here too.

No, Protagoras doesn't say that.

Student: He doesn't say it but he says he teaches virtue...

But what does virtue mean? Perhaps it means not more than cleverness and courage, i.e. nerve, combined. That is not exactly what we put the ordinary emphasis on and not what we ordinarily understand by decency because Mr. surely has his politics to a more, and above average degree and yet wouldn't be...that was not the point. But that is hard to say, that Protagoras is in an ordinary sense of the term a decent man, I mean that he didn't steal silver spoons and as we have seen from the beautiful address he made at the end of the speech to Socrates he is not envious and not petty and speaks very finely about how promising this young man is, relatively young man Socrates is. He is surely a nice man. I mean we must never make the mistake which is easy to make, that we identify ourselves simply with the good characters. We must also make an application to ourselves and ask the question, are we such, am I such, of course it goes without saying that is the most important application. But, still, since knowledge or awareness

is an important ingredient of decency, to learn the right standards is important for acting rightly, although it is not the same. That is a great error apparently committed by Socrates who thinks that if I know the right thing, I will do it. And the vulgar always say that isn't true and the vulgar are right in this respect. That is a problem. Yes?

Student: Would you speculate on the agreement between Socrates and Hippocrates before they go into Callias' house?

What do you mean?

Student: They stand outside and they discuss. And he speaks of an agreement...

An agreement does not necessarily mean an agreement regarding action. Agreement here has this wide meaning. They reached an agreement; some difficulty came up.

Student: Why is this placed in the dialogue?

Yes, I remember I had some thoughts. It is, of course, very striking that Socrates does not report this part of the conversation. Now where is it?

Student: About 314c.

Yes, that is correct. They conversed about some logos which had occurred to them on the way. Lest it be incomplete, we completed it and went in. And standing in the forehall we argued until we had agreed with each other. Of course, Plato makes us very curious. What was it? Socrates tells every detail and just not this little thing. I do not know and if you do not mind this disgraceful procedure I will simply look up whether something had occurred to me when I read that. Yes, well I said here that when this logos between Socrates and Hippocrates was undisclosed and would surely prove that not every logos is disclosed. They completed that logos while standing, not walking, and we discussed it at the time. And I said that this contrasts with the uncompleted conversation with Protagoras which follows. That is obviously incomplete because they do not know what virtue is. But here they reach... yes, I did not dare to make any guess. Perhaps one can do it by a more careful reading of the conversation of Hippocrates than we have done. But it is not wise to concentrate one's attention on this particularly hard nut and not concentrate first on the things which one can understand. Otherwise one would waste much too much time.

Student: What is the danger of Protagoras' speaking? Just because he didn't know what virtue is...

Excuse me. Hippocrates did not yet receive instruction from Protagoras. This is just when a boy comes to school and sees the president or the dean or some secretaries or whatever it is, or the public relations man. No instruction is given. How do you know that Protagoras in his instruction wouldn't say, laws are bunk--you have to comply with them externally but etc., etc. How do you know?

Student: Well, if you don't know then you have to wonder why Socrates went along with Hippocrates?

Since you do not know, since Hippocrates doesn't know, Socrates is absolutely justified in telling him don't take chances because teachings are not things like food which you buy in the marketplace and you have them in a vessel and you don't have to eat them. But teaching you cannot wrap up and take home and wash it and so on. But you take it and the damage which it has caused is there. Socrates makes this clear at great length. You remember that?

Student: I remember that but in this dialogue we are never told what the danger of sophistry is as sophistry.

Yes, well, I think a closer study would show and has shown it. Why is Protagoras so much embarrassed by the proposition that you cannot be prudent without being just? Why is he embarrassed by that? Because he believes that you can very well be shrewd and very successful in the world without being just. And if you believe that and you deal with such matters in your classroom, so to speak, we are not in Protagoras' classroom mind you. We are, as it were, before he registered for Protagoras' courses and here we are still at the Madison Avenue stage, not in the classroom. Yes?

Student: I got the impression that Hippocrates has political ambition...

Yes, how seriously they are to be taken we do not know. He is very young. But since there are all kinds of politicians, even taking ordinary politicians' standards, he might be a quite good run of the mill politician. Sure, he has political ambitions.

Student: Hippocrates will now leave Protagoras with those same ambitions and hopefully pick up the art of rhetoric someplace else so that he can gain the power that he might desire. What are Socrates' plans to combat this? Does he hope to get Hippocrates to come to him?

Perhaps but that is hard to say. The initiative is entirely with Hippocrates and there is no sign that Socrates

takes an eager positive interest in Hippocrates. He had the decent negative interest. I mean, if you see a man about to fall into a ditch of poisonous fumes, you will warn him.

Student: But what about Hippocrates? If Hippocrates is just going to be left drifting with all the, perhaps, corrupt politicians of Athens, wouldn't he be better off...

Yes, that is a problem. The question is this: If he has acquired in addition powerful tools as he might acquire through learning rhetoric, he would be worse. That is quite true. That is quite clear in the Meno, but also in other dialogues. Socrates disagrees with the sophists, and in retrospect he agrees with the majority of the citizens; but on different grounds. In the case of the majority of the citizens, at best, a kind of healthy instinct. But they don't... In the Meno the accuser of Socrates hates the sophists but when Socrates asks him, did you ever see one? He says, no! I don't want to see them or know anything about them. I just hate them! Now this is perhaps a good protection up to a certain point but it has also its weak side. You must know your enemy and you must not leave it at simply hating and killing him.

Student: According to the scheme of the Gorgias, sophistry is the sham legislative art and rhetoric is the sham art of justice. From this last comment it would seem that one thing that has been forgotten about is the legislative art. I mean, in the beginning they talked in terms of buying food for the body and you need a doctor or a trainer. And then when they talked about food for the soul they just mentioned the doctor of the soul, no trainer of the soul. And throughout there has been no discussion of the legislative art as such and we see that Socrates does not try to become a trainer of the soul of Hippocrates, he just sort of becomes a doctor by saving him from this disease. So, why would it be, then, that in the discussion of sophistry...

But that doesn't do. There is no, as I said it... in the Gorgias Socrates proposes to the master rhetorician what the true rhetoric is. In the Protagoras he does not suggest to the master sophist what a true sophistry would do. That is a fact. We cannot look for that in the Protagoras. There is a Platonic dialogue called Sophist and in that you would probably find an answer. But I don't think any of the other dialogues are devoted to sophistry. And the ideal task of the understanding of such dialogues would be to discover that fundamental premise or purpose of an individual dialogue from which all other teachers of the dialogue flow with perfect clarity and necessity. And I believe that the question of the concealment is broadest from this point of view. You arrive at the largest number of

features, which I have enumerated, by starting with that. In other words this sham, enlightenment, to use the modern term, for which Protagoras stands. It is sham enlightenment not only because the doctrine which it spreads is not true and sound but also because it is, it lacks that frankness which it claims. Yes, and this will be the last question.

Student: If I am not mistaken, Aristotle's judgment on sophists that they reduce the political art to rhetoric--I would like to know what significance there is on this question in Protagoras' treatment in the myth, where he reduces or defines the gift of Zeus, political virtue, to punishment? Because there I got the impression that there is an example, there is a spot where there is the recognition of the need for pressure, for coercion.

Quite true. Very good point. I do not know how I can answer that so easily. Let me see. What struck me most in the myth in various readings of it is this: that what he wanted to make clear is the difference between what is nature, i.e. what the subterranean gods, working without light did, the arts, that which Prometheus stole from heaven, and what we call morals, what for Protagoras would be merely conventional. Now if we disregard the mythical language of the gift of Zeus, it means that ordinary decency is a product of social pressure--punishment in the wider sense of not merely going to jail but disgrace. In other words, it has no truth in it. That is the point. Whereas the arts all have truth in them. The untruth is proven by the fact that in the case of this kind of vices or vicious actions nothing bad happens to the doer unless he is detected. And this shows the artificial character; whereas if you overeat, you may be in the strictest privacy, you will be punished for it. I mean, if you don't believe it ask anyone whoever ate or drank too much. And this takes place wholly independent of detection. And this notion is that any bad action that is punished only when detected is not intrinsically bad. An intrinsically bad action is one that punishes itself. Well, Xenophon alludes occasionally to this strange thing from a Socratic point of view. The penal laws, as ordinarily framed, are untrue assertions. "He who does this will be punished this and this way." Well, in order to make it true you would have to add, "if detected." Now to make a penal law true in this sense means, of course, to hold it up for ridicule. In other words, to encourage people to prevent their detection.

Now what could one say in reply to your very good point? Does Protagoras reduce the political art to rhetoric? Does he do that? You are quite right that his theory, in the myth and also nonmythically later, contradicts that. But do we have any other evidence that he did that?

Student: Then I think we would want to distinguish is that political art the gift of Zeus, which is not there because he skips over it...

Yes, but is not his whole doctrine based on the premise that virtue is not knowledge. Surely, that is clear. And therefore, it should not be teachable, as Socrates says. Now, of course, he says it is teachable but what does he understand by teachable? If the social pressure apparatus is a form of teaching, as a very broad and lax use of the word teaching, you see that. In other words, you are right. We have to reconsider with all due respect, Aristotle's statement about sophistry. And perhaps we must say that Protagoras, as presented in Plato's Republic doesn't fall under this heading. That may very well be. I cannot do more.

Well, I don't say I wish you a nice vacation as I ordinarily say at the end of classes because you still have to undergo that humiliation, the examination.